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JUNE 1989 A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

David Brock: The World of Narcoterrorism

WHY DANNY CAN'T READ

(see p. 13)

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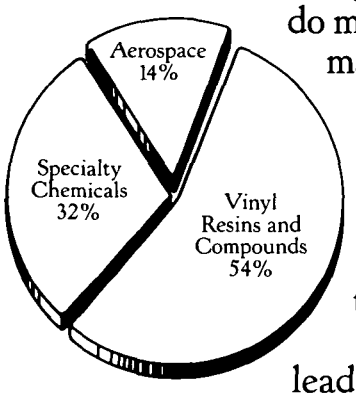

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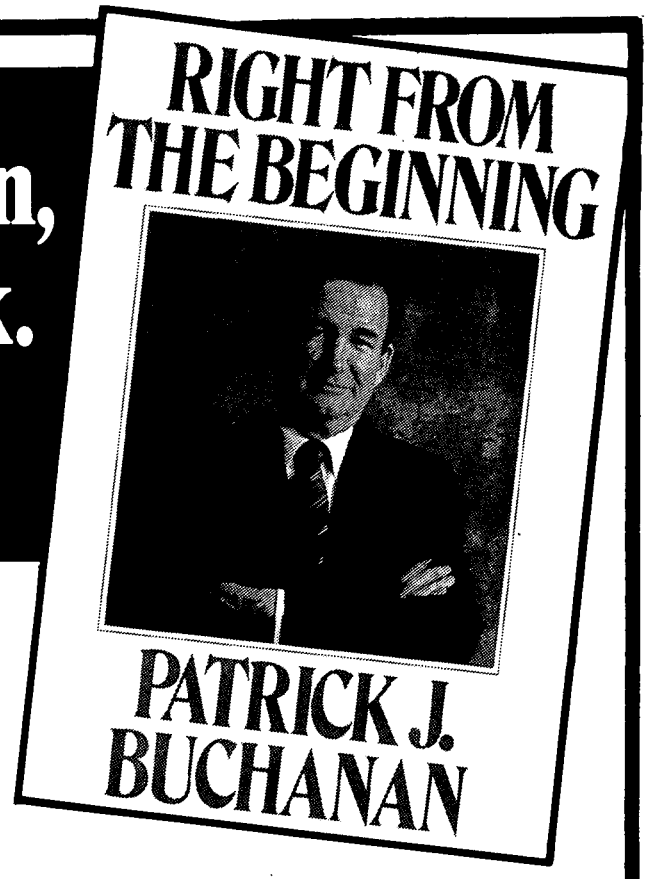

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The "New" PLO

Or: Can the Leopard Change its Spots?

After more than 20 years of ostracism by most of the civilized world, Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, has finally uttered the "magic words" demanded by the U.S. It didn't come easy, and he didn't get it quite right. But it was good enough for Secretary of State George Schultz who, "the words" having been spoken, declared the willingness of the U.S. to talk with the PLO. One wonders whether that surprising opening will bring peace in the Middle East any closer to realization.

What are the facts?

■ Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, having wrung major concessions from Israel, promised that the U.S. would not deal with the PLO unless it fulfilled two conditions: (1) it would accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 238; (2) it would recognize Israel's "existence". Congress added a third condition, namely that the PLO would renounce terrorism. Finally, after 20 years of obdurate resistance, Yasir Arafat, as spokesman for the PLO, did make those statements. Secretary Schultz decided therefore that the U.S. must establish contact with the PLO. Only a week earlier, the Secretary had refused Arafat a visa to enter the United States, because of his personal association with and personal responsibility for widespread terrorism all over the world.

■ What are the goals of the PLO, and is it likely that they have changed by the uttering of those three sentences? The PLO is a terror organization, created in 1964 by the Arab League. It has only one aim: the destruction of the State of Israel through force and violence. Any apparent deviation from this single-minded aim is a temporary tactical maneuver.

■ The basic charter of the PLO is the so-called "Palestinian National Covenant." Its main theme is that the State of Israel has no right whatever to exist. It states clearly that "Palestine...is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland," and that "the Arab-Palestinian people...reject all solutions that substitute for the total liberation of Palestine." Those PLO and Arab leaders who have from time to time ventured to propose a less inflexible approach have invariably paid with their lives for such deviation from PLO "orthodoxy".

■ The recent unilateral declaration by the PLO of a "Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem" on territory administered by and under control of Israel is an attempted step in that direction. The PLO was founded long before Israeli administration of Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. Its avowed purpose was then, has always been and continues to be, not the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the destruction of Israel proper.

■ The PLO is the kingpin of international terror. It maintains a complex network of relations with all of the main terror organizations throughout the world. It has written a blood-spattered record of unrelenting terror. Some of their more "glorious" exploits: the mid-air explosion of a Swissair jetliner (47 dead); the attack on pilgrims and passengers at Ben-Gurion International Airport (26 dead, 76 wounded); the attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics (11 dead); attack on the Ma'alot school (24 dead, 62 wounded—mostly children); the hi-jacking of a passenger bus on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway (35 dead, 80 wounded); the coordinated shoot-outs at the Rome and Vienna Airports (16 dead); and the murderous attack on the Istanbul Synagogue, in which 21 worshippers were killed.

■ In their attacks against Americans, the PLO hand is suspected in many of the kidnappings of U.S. hostages. American citizen Leon Klinghoffer was brutally killed in the PLO ship-jacking of the *Achille Lauro*. Some of the most brutal PLO attacks against Americans have been against U.S. diplomats. In the Sudan, in 1973, two American diplomats, Ambassador Cleo Noel and Chargé d'Affaires George C. Moore, were mercilessly machine gunned to death when blackmail demands were not met. *The Washington Post* reported on reliable evidence that Yasir Arafat personally was in charge of these executions. In 1976, Ambassador Francis Meloy, Jr. and Counselor Robert Waring were assassinated in Beirut, an attack widely believed to have been the work of the PFLP, a faction of the PLO. In March of 1988, a bomb-laden car was placed in front of the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem in an attempt to assassinate Secretary George Shultz. There have been many bombings, hi-jackings, and terrorist attacks in virtually every Mid-East and European country, leaving countless dead and wounded. While the final verdict is not yet in, it is generally assumed by our government and by those who are investigating this terrible crime that one of the Palestinian factions patterned after and instructed by the PLO is responsible for the bombing of Pan Am flight #103, which cost over 270 mostly American lives.

Can the leopard change its spots? It does not seem likely. And it does not seem likely that the PLO, engaged in unrelenting terror since its creation 24 years ago, could suddenly become a factor for peace, just because of the intonation of a few "magic phrases". It is comforting to think that peace in the Middle East can be achieved by bestowing respectability on the PLO. But the only way to bring about peace in the Middle East is by direct negotiations between Israel and representatives of the residents of the administered territories, as agreed in the Camp David Accord: a period of autonomy, after which the final disposition and status of the territories will be decided by the people involved. The PLO cannot be a party to the peace process, because its charter calls for war and destruction and because terror and peace cannot exist together.

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"STOP THEM DAMN PICTURES"

That's what "Boss" Tweed demanded when he saw the handwriting on the

Hall (Tammany, that is). But the pictures didn't stop. "Boss" Tweed met his maker in the Ludlow Street Jail and Thomas Nast put bitingly eloquent political cartoons squarely and permanently in the middle of American political life. Tweed aside, we think Emerson had it right when he said, ***"Caricatures are often the truest history of the times."***

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THE CONTINUING CRISIS

• April was a very quiet month, and the Republic's commentators are in a dreadful state over the possibility that this stillness is but a presentiment of the full Bushian era. Are we to go back to the old days when the nation's divertissements were the products of private citizens in grease paint rather than pols, as has been our condition at least since Roosevelt II? Will newsmen cease to be the chauffeurs of the citizenry's thrills and sweats? Is it possible that America's 1990s will be likened to America's 1890s—palmy times, benignity all around, grim national crusades, a sense of well-being presided over by such avuncular figures as Presidents Cleveland and McKinley? Possibly so and possibly no. Moral fires flare anew and with good reason. The virtuous Democrats have been hounding their opponents for pecadillos, appearances of pecadillos, and appearances of appearances of pecadillos; and on April 18 things got out of hand. On that day the House Ethics Committee voted unanimously to charge Speaker Jim Wright with sixty-nine violations of House ethics rules. Better still, Old Dirty Paws vows to fight each charge, though some pundits doubt his tenure will last beyond summer. What is more, President Bush has had reason to be out of the limelight. On April 20 the front page of the *New York Times* reported that an asteroid passed within half a million miles of earth, and no government agency notified us. President Bush should be ashamed; such nonchalance did not obtain in the good old days of Jimmy Carter—and they get older every day.

• As the worldwide Marxist-Leninist vivarium rumbles with changes hitherto unforeseen, some very curious news stories are being released and in very curious sequence. On April 5, *Pravda* reported that Dr. Sergei S. Debov, official overseer of Mr. Vladimir I. Lenin's embalmed remains, had reassured that venerable organ of red rectitude that "the preservation of Lenin's body is guaranteed for an extended period of time." What? What kind of news story is this? And Dr. Debov went on: the body requires "daily vigilant observation" and is examined by a governmental commission every four or five years. Back in 1924 when the corpse became a corpse, the astonishing Dr. Debov exclaimed, scientists worked round the clock, "in a struggle to preserve literally every square millimeter of skin against putrefaction"; and for now everything is okie-dokie. And all is well in the People's Republic of China too, if that country's Marxist-Leninist necrophiliacs are to be believed. Precisely one day after *Pravda*'s revelations, a mysterious Dr. Xu Jing, chief of the Management Bureau of the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, rushed forward to squelch rumors that the embalmed body of Chairman Mao Tse-tung is "shrinking," though no such rumors had reached my ears. According to Dr. Xu, the plump little dictator's vital statistics are exactly as they were on that sad day back in 1976 when he assumed room temperature—quoth Dr. Xu: "We regularly and precisely monitor the length and weight of Chairman Mao's remains. . . . A vast amount of data shows the remains have not shrunk." Moreover, Dr. Xu believes that techniques developed to combat decay-causing bacteria in Chairman Mao can be applied to the fields of "book preservation and grain storage." Now what will the eminent Dr. George F. Kennan make of that?

• In women's news, congratulations are in order for Miss Suzie Shepherd, 39, of Portland, Oregon, who was named

Ms. International Leather at the International Leather Pageant in downtown San Francisco. Miss Shepherd, a sado-masochist and legal secretary, wore a full-length, red spandex body suit with a black leather belt, heavy chains, a harness, and lace-up boots, very similar to the attire worn in many of Manhattan's unisex aerobics centers. In Stockholm, eight female frogs escaped from a holding pen in the Esrange rocket center, delaying a rocket launch and an anticipated series of studies of female coital behavior with eight lucky males in a weightless environment. China's *Xinmin Evening News* reports that Chinese peasants seeking obedient wives prefer mentally retarded girls, who are apparently more ladylike than mentally fit Chinese gals and fetch as much as $1,500 on the hick market. Finally, Empress Zita, the last Hapsburg monarch, was laid to rest in Vienna, Austria; and in Mulhouse, France, hundreds of Hungarian gypsies gathered to pay last respects to the mortally ill "Baron Demeter," king of the gypsies.

• In men's news, there was irony aplenty in New York, where a 67-year-old Park Avenue dentist, Dr. Michail Koplik, was arrested on charges of entering into sexual congress with a patient while she was anesthetized—the same impolite act that his twin brother pled guilty to four years ago. In Woodstock, New York, Judge Jules Viglielmo has dropped charges against Mr. Richard "Luke" Clementis, 52, for transporting the corpse of his recently deceased friend, Mr. James Mattison, 59, across state lines. The judge's leniency evoked indignation from Woodstock Police Chief John Salters, who described Mr. Clementis as a "bum." The gentlemen in question had been on a treasure hunt in Oklahoma when Mr. Mattison expired whilst seated on their motor home's built-in toilet. "The guy died," Chief Salters fumed, "going to the bathroom and that's where he remained for four days. He [Clementis] left him [Mattison] right on the toilet, propped him up a little bit and headed home." As to Judge Viglielmo's determination that Mr. Clementis intended no harm, Chief Salters responds: "I don't agree. [The judge] didn't pull the body out of the motor home."

• In still more men's news, beer is being touted as an excellent antidote to cholesterol; and the distinguished Dr. Robin Saunders of the Department of Agriculture's food quality research unit in Albany, California, is ardent to commence studies on the matter. President George Bush threw out the first baseball of the season, auspicating a game between the Baltimore Orioles and the Boston Red Sox; and Professor Richard Hummel, 60, has been barred from the University of Toronto's swimming pool. A high university tribunal found Professor Hummel, a near-sighted instructor of chemical engineering, guilty of wearing goggles, a snorkel, and flippers in the pool the better to "leer" at the nether regions of female swimmers. The proceedings against Professor Hummel began after a complaint was filed by part-time student Miss Beverly Torfason (no photograph available), who testified that Professor Hummel fluttered next to her for four laps "while watching me intently." Professor Hummel promised never again to look at her, but Miss Torfason, who is somewhat self-conscious, insisted that he be banned from the pool, and the tribunal agreed, noting that "prolonged and intense staring can create a hostile environment in any setting, but especially in and around a swimming pool." Professor Hummel has been ordered to "undergo" counseling.

• Authorities in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have vowed that never again will an inmate of their state prison system be allowed to have cosmetic surgery on his/her private parts at government expense. The decision came after it was reported that an unidentified inmate had an artificial testicle implanted after his/her diseased testicle was removed surgically. Former Senator Chic Hecht was again the butt of Liberal jocosity after his forthright testimony during Senate hearings regarding his qualifications to serve as U.S. ambassador to the Bahamas. What fits him for this post is his golf game and, he testified, "I've been involved in gambling in Nevada." Egypt's cultural emissary, Mr. Abdel-Latif Aboul-Ela, has found himself in an unanticipated row with the eminent Mr. Dallas Jackson, co-founder of the Blackology Speaking Committee of Texas. The committee has publicly threatened to boycott the "Ramses the Great" exhibit sponsored by the Egyp-

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tian government at the Texas State Fairgrounds unless Ramses II, a twelfth century B.C. pharaoh, is identified as being Negro. "We are tired of people using our culture and history," declared the erudite Mr. Jackson, "to make money off of us." Now Mr. Aboul-Ela has really stepped in it, denying that Ramses II was either white or black. Well, America wants to know: Was Ramses II off-white? perhaps beige? Ours is a color-free society.

• Mr. Abbie Hoffman, 52, committed suicide in his home, a converted turkey coop, by taking 150 phenobarbital pills, which he washed down with booze—very bourgeois, eh Mrs. Robinson? Yet the Crisis ends on good news this month. Speaking at a meeting of the Council on Foundations, former President Jimmy Carter yawped: "I have great confidence that Bush can bring about changes to some of the mistakes [of the Reagan administration]."—*RET*

CORRESPONDENCE

Fred Barnes on Drugs

It must somehow be very comforting to have the self-righteousness to support a war to force others to live according to the dictates of your conscience. And so the Ayatollahs will stop at nothing to prevent heretics from corrupting our minds while Fred Barnes cheers on Drug Czar Bennett and his band of fanatics ("Bennett the Drug Czar," *TAS*, April 1989) as they wage their crusade against those who would corrupt our bodies. Obviously, the objects of their wrath are so tempting to impressionable subjects that we, like Odysseus confronting the Sirens, lack the volition to just say no.

Almost any other government program that promised as much, as often, and delivered as little as the drug war would be the object of *TAS*'s ridicule. Why, in this case, have you acted like liberals in letting your visions obscure your judgments? —*David Kahn*
New York, New York

With all due respect to Fred Barnes, George Bush can sleep in Bill Bennett's office seven nights a week and it won't make any more of a dent in America's "drug problem" than lapel pins, slogans, or disendorsements by such ghetto role models as Nancy Reagan. Like just about everybody else, it seems, Mr. Barnes cannot address America's "drug problem" sensibly because he can't comprehend the staggering profits involved in the manufacture and distribution of illegal drugs.

Pulling a dealer off the streets just sets off a war to succeed him. Bail denial? Wowie, that ought to throw a scare into those drug baddies. And while we're at it, Mr. Barnes's "D" rating for movies and TV ought to have a terrific effect on the nine-year-old crack runner as he comes in from a hard afternoon's work *at $100 an hour.*

Memorize this, Mr. Barnes: the rewards of the drug trade are worth *any* risk; there is no deterrent.

It is as facile and useless to blame our "drug problem" on the dealers (they'd deal oat bran if the numbers were the same) as it is dishonorable and cowardly to blame it on Third World countries. It's our problem, not theirs; why should a Colombian peasant care if a lot of spoiled Americans, our ghetto youth specifically included, want to trash their blessings and destroy their souls?

There are two solutions. The first, legalization, would stamp out the drug trade overnight, and with it the violent crime and corruption so necessary to the dealer to maintain his turf and the user to buy substances he could easily afford if they weren't illegal. The second, criminalization and imprisonment of users, would eventually return drug abuse to the wretched but minor problem it was forty years ago. To get up and running, the latter would cost about $150 billion and put serious but tolerable pressure on the Bill of Rights. The former takes only guts and salesmanship. Both are sound conservative positions. —*M.R.V. Whitman*
San Francisco, California

Change the subject matter of Fred Barnes's article from drugs to something like "Homelessness," and it would sound like yet another ritual incantation of idiot liberalism. If the Barnes Agenda is enacted, several things will likely happen: dozens (if not hundreds) of American servicemen will die in various Latin American nations, civil liberties will be diminished (one need not be an ACLU "zealot" to favor individual liberty), a few billion dollars will be wasted, and thousands will continue to destroy themselves with drugs. All of this in the name of protecting people from themselves. . . .

—*James Clark Stooksbury*
Knoxville, Tennessee

Fred Barnes replies:

Hey, not so fast. David Kahn thinks I should have ridiculed Czar Bennett's drug war as a failure. Maybe I will a year from now. But for heaven's sake, the guy has just gotten to the combat zone. He doesn't promulgate his big strategy until September. My article was about what Bennett should put in his plan. I was giving advice. I'll stipulate that the federal government's prior antidrug efforts failed embarrassingly. If they'd succeeded, we wouldn't need Bennett now. But prior efforts weren't the subject of my piece.

James Clark Stooksbury doesn't like my advice. Fine. But what makes it "idiot liberalism"? The "idiot" part I don't mind, but "liberal"—that hurts. Tell me, though, Mr. Stooksbury, what's liberal about a unilateral military raid on the drug labs of Colombia? What's liberal about denying bail to drug dealers caught red-handed? Stooksbury complains that "civil liberties will be diminished." Absolutely. That's the whole point, diminishing the liberties of drug dealers.

M.R.V. Whitman is half right. No, legalization of drugs is not a conservative position, nor a good one. Yes, punishing drug users severely is a good idea. I hope Bennett has the moxie to propose it.

The New Left Failed?

I very seldom write to express either my agreements or disagreements with published views. I know that this is a weakness of most conservatives, and I plead guilty. However, Arch Puddington's article in the March 1989 issue, "Those Were the Days: The SDS Revisited," has moved me to write. I quote the first sentence: "The question of why the New Left failed as a political movement . . ." I thought that was an ironic or sarcastic beginning. But the more I read the more I could not believe that the author was serious. The New Left . . . failed??!!

I must live on another planet or at least a different country, because where I live, the New Left has certainly not failed. Who controls most of the major media? Who controls the Democratic party? Who controls more and more of the "prestigious" universities? Who controls most of the large foundations? Who controls most of the major unions? I live in New York City, and the government, all its agencies, all the bureaucracy, is certainly controlled by the New Left.

Frankly, any organization that can achieve as much as the New Left has in less than thirty years can hardly be called a failure. Maybe Mr. Puddington sees a different world than I do, and if such be the case, I would like a pair of the rose colored glasses he uses.

—*Steve Masters*
Rego Park, New York

Arch Puddington replies:

Steve Masters obviously did not read my article to its conclusion. As I pointed out, ". . . though the New Left failed as a political movement, the influence it has exerted over American politics is much more powerful than anyone supposed." The New Left's lingering presence is felt primarily through the impressive constellation of single-issue lobbies which, to cite just one example, was largely responsible for the rejection of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court. And while Mr. Masters's picture of leftist domination of American political and cultural institutions is exaggerated to the point of caricature, the point is valid that many, many individuals whose values were shaped by the New Left experience occupy positions of influence throughout society. Where the New Left failed most notably is in the realm of ideas and values. Radical participatory democracy, America as imperialist bully, American society as incorrigibly racist, middle-class students as paragons of morality and wisdom, free love, Uncle Ho as a Jeffersonian agrarian reformer—these notions, so crucial to the New Left, were consistently and resoundingly rejected by the American people, as witness the results of the last three presidential elections.

Kudos

Please extend my thanks to Mr. Andrew Ferguson for his wonderful piece ("Bush Bash") in the March 1989 issue. While reading the article I had an epiphany. The difference between a writer and myself is this: While I realize Sid, Up With People, and Kris are total morons, I do not have the ability to say it while making people laugh. Obviously Mr. Ferguson does.

The article has inspired me to be a kinder-gentler-wittier person. No more offhand remarks referring to those of an alternative lifestyle as butt-pirates while in a crowded elevator on the University of Texas campus. No more will I heatedly state that the equilibrium level of infant mortality rates should *not* be zero, while amidst a group of those who genuinely care about the human race.

No sir. No more bull-in-a-china shop reaction to the assorted jackasses around me.

—*Gary M. Torrent*
Austin, Texas

(continued on page 55)

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EDITORIALS

DRUG DEALINGS

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

I hope the Republic's drug dealers and addicts were not following the news stories on April 10 when Drug Czar William J. Bennett brassily announced his aggressive $80 million plan for the suppression of these louts in our nation's capital. The District of Columbia is the Beirut of America's drug culture, and the administration has promised to bring all the might of the federal government to bear upon its bloody traffic in illicit drugs. Yet if the denizens of the drug culture noticed the political response to the administration's plan, they must recognize that government will remain impotent to clamp down on them.

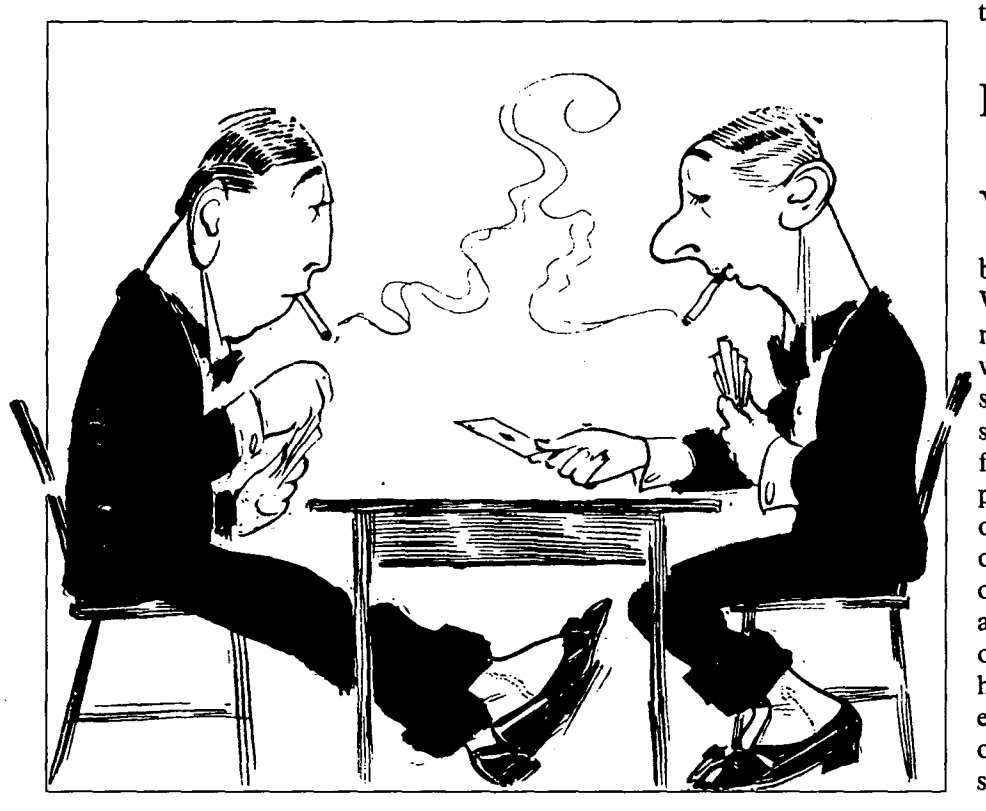
No sooner had Bennett announced his plan for building more hoosegows and bringing in more law enforcement officers than the Republic's so-called progressives were atwitter with alarm. When Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp announced a coordinated plan that would make it easier to evict drug offenders from federal housing projects, the alarm turned to derision. "This is not getting rid of the problem," sneered Mr. Rick Tingling-Clemmons, an official from something called the National Tenant Organization. "The people affected by this would then be homeless and we'll have to pay more money for them than we're already paying." But "the people affected by this" are drug offenders, and Mr. Bennett would not leave drug offenders homeless. He would move them from public housing, where they prey on the innocent, to public jails, where they belong. Mr. Tingling-Clemmons's response to Secretary Kemp's recommendation that security cameras be installed in housing projects and that their harassed tenants carry identification cards was classic: "That sounds like apartheid." Apartheid? Is the Republic of South Africa's infamous policy a vast program to combat drugs, or is it a racist program? Is Mr. Tingling-Clemmons alleging that the administration's program is racist? He is, and he is not alone. The Rev. Jesse Jackson's comment was, "What struck me was the three white males there to announce the plan without any city officials." I have always thought that a racist is one who focuses on the color of one's skin rather than the substance of one's labors.

And so it seems that the antidrug initiatives of Messrs. Bennett and Kemp are going to run smack into the maneuverings of those weird creatures who emerged from the 1960s, some to reform the wrongs of the past, others to exploit those wrongs. Both types seem to have learned nothing from the growing carnage of the drug culture. They respond to the administration's plan with the empty bromides of the past: Drug Education! Drug Rehabilitation! Experience shows that these are mere placebos. Participation in the drug culture is a felonious act best left to the cops' ministrations. They at least know how to make an arrest. No one seems to know how else to deal with large numbers of drug abusers.

A 1987 National Institute of Justice report sums up what researchers have learned about drug education: "There is no consistent evidence that drug education programs either decrease or increase the likelihood that students will use drugs." (Though the report adds that some education programs encourage drug use among young people.) And a recent Rand Corporation study of drug rehabilitation programs in the District produced equally dismal findings. Rehabilitation programs are hugely expensive and bring few positive results.

Meanwhile, drug abuse continues to take a grisly toll. The Department of Transportation estimates that as many as 15 percent of all highway fatalities are drug-related. National Institute of Justice studies find that in some cities as many as three out of four persons arrested test positive for drugs. Perhaps 40 percent of those serving time in federal prisons admit to using drugs while committing crimes. Ordinary Americans in large numbers want the government to take vigorous action against drugs. Ever more evidence suggests that the intelligent use of drug testing and incarceration is the only way to suppress the drug culture. The Navy's drug testing program has cut drug use among Navy personnel markedly. Corporations have made the same discovery. I predict that the drug culture will flourish, particularly among the very poor. They are the unfortunate constituents of the Rev. Jackson, and the creatures from the 1960s. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*



LOOKING FOR LOONS

Where are all the nuts of yesteryear? The other day I happened by Lafayette Park across from the White House. To my astonishment the motley of shabby prophets and loons was nowhere to be seen. A gorgeous sun shone down on beds of tulips and silver streams of water arching up from the black waters of reflecting pools. The heroic statuary gleamed but on the lush lawns reposed only the occasional Romeo and Juliet, and on the old benches only bureaucrats and tourists taking a break. For just over two decades the park has been home for milling mobs of protesters, usually the demented types but occasionally protesters from professional grievance groups such as the National Organization for Women.

Now even the demented types are gone. I saw one ensconced in a cardboard Taj Mahal graced with the unexceptional message, "Wanted: Wisdom and Honesty." And there was another standing above what appeared to be a procession of little yellow egg cartons, lettered, I believe, with such words as "apartheid," "poverty," "processed foods"—topics that did not hang together. I returned the next day to get the details, but the entire display had vanished. Alas, Messrs. Bush and Gorbachev make it very difficult for the American of apocalyptic vision and neurotic fervor to gather a crowd.

Finding the nuts is not going to get easier if Bush and Gorbachev have

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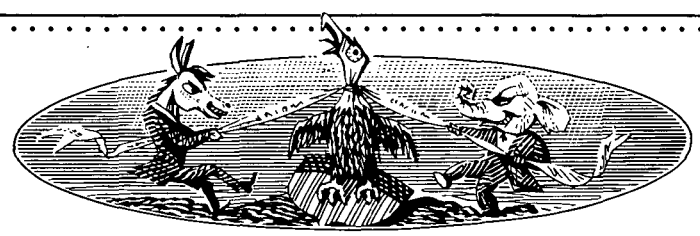
their way. They are not summoning us to the brink any longer. In America and apparently even in the Soviet Union the citizenry is being urged merely to be productive and law abiding. For me the only reliable location for viewing the glassy-eyed and furious is Georgetown University, which is precisely where I went recently to espy some old-fashioned fruitcakes. I suppose I could have fared equally well on most of the other campuses in the country, but at Georgetown's McNeir Hall a couple of middle-aged radicals were defending in debate the student protests of the 1960s against former radicals Ronald Radosh and David Horowitz. With Peter Collier, Horowitz has just written a splendid book asserting that the radicals of the 1960s so weakened American authority and values as to assure the pathologies of the 1970s, many of which—for instance, drugs and venereal disease—are still with us.

In *Destructive Generation* (Summit Books, $19.95), the authors argue that the main pox of 1960s radicalism, the New Left, hated American liberalism and America generally. Violence, personal indulgence, intolerance, elitism, and brat-kid narcissism were the major ingredients of the New Left, many of whose members have never acknowledged the destructive consequences of their acts and reign today as middle-aged faculty in the closed society of the university. In defense of the New Left slouched two museum pieces from 1969. Only one was a professor, but both were in uniform: pole-climber boots, blue jeans, book bags (Attache cases? Never!), and the insufferable mannerisms of the spoiled child.

I was eager to hear their defense. Were they of the opinion that Southeast Asia is now prosperous and democratic, that libertine sex is wholesome, that drug abuse is fine, that there was no destruction from their protests, no murders committed by Black Panthers?

(continued on page 55)

CAPITOL IDEAS



THIRD WORLD HYDRAULICS

by Tom Bethell

A feature of recent reporting about Third World debt has been a kind of willful self-deception. We are told that the issue is above all one of debt reduction. "Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady uttered the magic words last week: 'Debt reduction,' " the *New York Times* editorialized in mid-March. "He conceded that Third World countries, heavily in debt to Western banks, needed relief." A few paragraphs further on, however, we were told that "creditor banks must continue new lending." On April 10 journalist-advocate Jonathan Fuerbringer recommended in the *New York Times*'s news columns that "new loans must be made even as old debt is forgiven." The *Washington Post* stressed the need for "a continued flow of new lending."

The issue never was "debt reduction." As seen by the Treasury (or perhaps more accurately, Treasury Undersecretary David C. Mulford and his assistant Charles Delarra), the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and their media flacks, the real issue is: How are we going to persuade the big banks to go on shoveling more money into Latin America, given those countries' obvious reluctance to repay their existing debts?

The key point about Third World debt is this: Latin American countries were already enjoying debt relief before the Brady plan was proposed. This had been obtained by the simple expedient of nonpayment. Nations are now securely beyond the reach of gunboats, and if they want debt relief, they can have it any time they want. All they have to do is stop paying. Most countries have not announced this as policy, however, because their office-holders enjoy spending the dollars that Americans keep sending them (under the mistaken impression that the money is "capital" and that it will be "invested"), and they would like to receive more such dollars in the future. They have learned that all they have to do is wring their hands and promise to make reforms; whereupon they have been permitted to renegotiate their debts and more money has been forthcoming to pay old interest.

But this still leaves the Latins short of new spending money. Here the outmoded theories of economists have come to the rescue. To an amazing extent, Keynesian economists are still in control of international economic policy—one of the main reasons why the Third World remains in such a mess year after year. Keynesian theory equates new spending with economic growth. In order to "grow," then, the Latin economies needed more loans from the U.S. Here is a relevant paragraph from a *Washington Post* editorial (April 5), possibly written by Hobart Rowen, a tireless exponent of what I call Hydraulic Economics:

> Up through 1987 it was still possible to hope that, with enough new lending, the Latin debtors could grow out of their troubles. But during the past year, all the major debtors have been sinking toward stagnation. One central reason is a drastic drop in investment—and investment is down because of the enormous flows of money outward to service the debts. Meanwhile it has become increasingly clear that the commercial banks will not renew lending to the debtors on anything approaching the scale necessary to ensure growth there. [Note the way "growth" is made dependent on "lending," which is conflated with "investment."]

Riots in Venezuela at the end of February provided the convenient rationale for promoting the Brady plan. Stripped of all obfuscation, the purpose of the plan is to reach into the pockets of American taxpayers and use their dollars to repay old loans made by the New York banks, who will then be encouraged to make new loans. (Those democracies down there are fragile, remember, so pay up gladly. In the long run it will be a good investment for us all! We wouldn't want to see the return of the *caudillos*, would we?) "Unless the Bush Administration accelerates its promised debt relief proposals," the *New York Times* urged within three days of the Caracas riots, "the flames could spread to many other Latin American democracies."

Amidst the deception, an outstanding article about the debt appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, by Larry A. Sjaastad of the University of Chicago. "It is not so much a question of helping out the debtor countries, but rather reimbursing, after the fact, the stockholders of the creditor banks for losses already acknowledged by the market," he wrote. "Indeed, if the U.S. Congress were to come up with $75 billion tomorrow to write off the entire external bank debt of Brazil the money would never leave New York. Since Brazil is not servicing that debt, it would be little better off, but bank shares would soar on Wall Street."

He added that since the Mexican default in 1982, "the book value of the developing countries' capital-market debt, both short and long term, rose to $610 billion from $472 billion. The market value of that debt, however, has declined to probably less than $240 billion. On an accrual basis, this amounts to an approximate $370 billion transfer to the debtor countries. Yet we hear never-ending laments about the 'burden' of that debt, when one might well ask: When in history have debtors had it so good?"

Melanie Tammen of the Competitive Enterprise Institute in Washington, D.C. makes much the same point. "Just when official intervention has less justification than it ever did," she wrote in CEI's *Update*, "Brady would use official assistance (through the World Bank and the IMF) to 'facilitate' what has been under way since the mid-1980s—the bargaining process between debtors and creditors. With most Latin American debt now valued at ten to forty cents to the dollar and still falling, new-fangled World Bank 'guarantees' on commercial bank debt . . . will only provide a further boon to Western banks."

I sought a comment on this from John Williamson, a senior fellow at the Institute for International Economics, C. Fred Bergsten's shop (high-profile advocates of World Bank and IMF policies and Hydraulic Economics in general). →

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington correspondent.*

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"These debts are already being written down," I mentioned to Williamson. "Look at the discounts they trade at on the secondary market." (A Brit, Williamson went to the London School of Economics in the mid-1950s, did graduate studies at Princeton, worked at the IMF, has been with Bergsten since 1981.)

"Writing it down doesn't give any benefit to the debtor unless the debtor can buy the debt back in the secondary market," he said.

I countered that the secondary market discount meant that the countries were not, in fact, paying their debts. Which amounts to relief.

"No," he said. "The debtor countries get no benefit from the fact that the debts trade at a discount. . . . They are paying interest on the face value of the debt, not on its market value."

"Oh, they have been paying the interest?"

"By and large they have been paying," he said. "There are countries in arrears. Brazil had a moratorium for a few months. There are several countries that are seriously in arrears. Bolivia has not paid since 1985. Costa Rica has only been paying about 40 percent. Ecuador has not been paying interest. And Peru, of course. Originally it was going to restrict the payment of interest to 10 percent of export value. In the first year it actually paid more than that. I think now it is paying less. And Argentina is in arrears as well."

I found out the next day that Venezuela suspended payments in December, and according to Prof. Sjaastad, Brazil "is not servicing" its debt. That pretty much leaves Mexico, which, Williamson said, "has serviced everything punctiliously since 1982." With the help of huge transfers from the IMF, he might have added. (The IMF should be thought of as a mechanism for transferring money from Washington to New York.) Williamson said the Brady plan was "clearly designed for Mexico in the first instance."

He joined in the general chorus of approval of Mexico. It now had a "competitive exchange rate" and a reduced budget deficit, he said. To a Hydraulics practitioner these are the key variables. (A "competitive" exchange rate is one that pushes out exports which suck in hard currency, which in turn drives the turbines of the imaginary machine called "the economy.")

What about capital flight, I asked. How do you stop that?

"There's no question that the biggest single stimulus to capital flight is an overvalued exchange rate, which everyone can see is going to be devalued in the future," Williamson said. "So then you want to get your money out before it happens. Negative real interest rates are another element which drives capital out. And fiscal deficits, because they are likely to lead to monetary expansion." In short, "macroeconomic policies must be in order."

What about such legal institutions as private property, and the rule of law, holding officials accountable for their actions and restraining them from stealing money and sending it abroad?

"That's important, too," Williamson conceded, adding that he didn't have "as good a fix on that as I do on the macroeconomic issues." But he didn't know how these institutions could be quantified. "I don't deny the importance of a role for property and incentives for honest behavior," he said. "It's something which economists have neglected." As for which countries in Latin America particularly needed to address the security-of-property issue, Williamson was unsure.

"Is this Brady plan not simply a scheme to bail out the banks?" I asked.

Banks are being encouraged to swap "high risk, high return debt for low risk, low return debt," he said. Under it, the banks would merely be "as well off as they were before."

The next day there was a story in the *New York Times* business section

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headlined "Brady Plan Lifts Big Bank Stocks." Michael Quint reported that the stocks of "big bank lenders to the Third World have increased by more than 10 percent since the Treasury plan was announced" in March. "Major price gains" were reported for Chase Manhattan, Manufacturers Hanover, and Chemical Bank, smaller gains for other banks.

At the moment, then, the markets perceive that with the Brady plan in place the banks will take less of a beating on their Third World loans than if their debts are simply written down by voluntary agreements between lenders and borrowers.

The main problem with the analysis of the debt problem is that mainstream economists still don't understand the importance of the institutional arrangements that permit *our* economy (and a few others) to work satisfactorily. In the absence of these institutions, you do not really have any such thing as an "economy." Believing that the exchange rate is the most important determinant of capital flight, as Williamson does, is like believing that a skyscraper should function satisfactorily if its elevators are in order, and dismissing as relatively unimportant the question of whether or not it has foundations. *Third world economies are like skyscrapers without foundations!* Until economists recognize this they will be wasting their time and our money.

Fred Bergsten, John Williamson, Hobart Rowen & Co may believe that a large chunk of money labeled "capital," when it leaves the computers of Citicorp, remains "capital" and will be "invested" when it arrives in Mexico City or Brasilia. But in the absence of the rule of law (holding government officials to the same standards of accountability as ordinary citizens), the money will in the end simply be consumed. For the sake of appearances, its expenditure will be termed "investment," but in practice payrolls will be padded, roads built into the midst of the Amazon jungle . . . (How come the left, which is so exercised about Brazil, has not yet made the connection between erroneously labeled "investment"—Brazil using money provided by Western banks—and the destruction of the rain forests?) In a particularly mindless editorial, the *New York Times* expressed frustration at "the reckless destruction of the Amazon rain forests," and concluded that "given its $115 billion foreign debt, Brazil needs special help." Translation: more money.

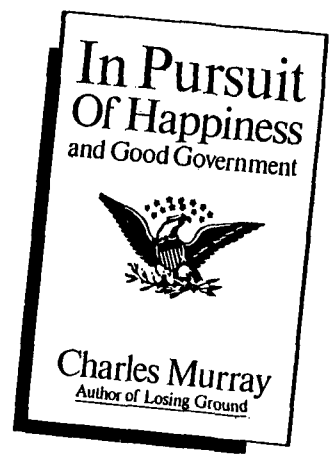
"I'm not saying that all the investment was the very best," Williamson said when I raised the point. "There was a lot of waste in Amazonia. Burning up the forests, building roads which encouraged people to burn up the forests . . ."

In the end, the problem is that the World Bank, IMF, Fred Bergsten & Co. are the slaves of a defunct economist—John Maynard Keynes. For in the Keynesian scheme, which reverses Say's Law, standing economics on its head by asserting that *demand creates supply*, it really doesn't matter if "investment" turns out to be mere consumption after all. Because, through the engines of hydraulic transmission (the model these people unconsciously carry about in their heads) consumption itself will drive the turbines of production.

"The economy" of a nation is the smallest unit of economic activity they can visualize. It should of course be the individual. This grave error explains why such economists favor free trade between nations, but are indifferent to free trade between people. As I write, Mexico is being heralded everywhere (including the *Wall Street Journal* editorial columns) for its reforms, which happen to include wage and price controls. This denies individuals the right to trade freely with one another. No such "reforms" can possibly succeed.

Next month, let us take a look at Mexico in more detail. □

"*Losing Ground* made waves. *In Pursuit* will make tidal waves. With this book Charles Murray has solidified his position as the pre-eminent social scientist in America."
—Edward H. Crane III
Cato Institute



IN PURSUIT

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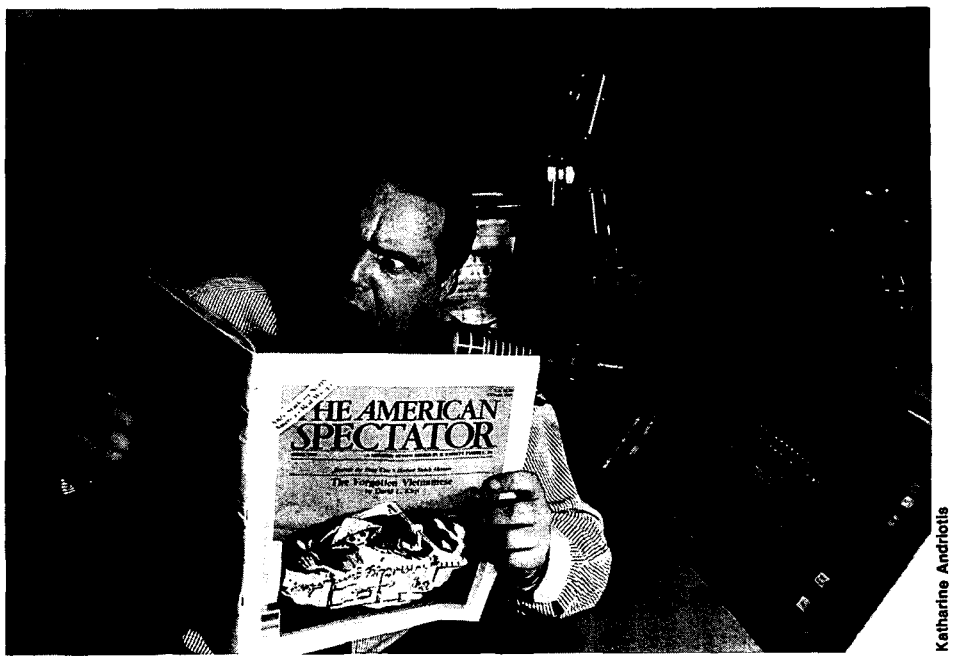

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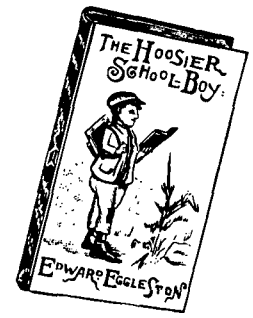
A letter from the staff

A Danny Quayle Reader



Dear Danny Pen-Pal

The Interview Ace

"I used to, I've read, I read National Review—some. I used to read Human Events. Don't read it as much as I used to. **The American Spectator**—it's hard to get through **The American Spectator.**"
—The Vice President

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 1989

Holy cow! Why didn't you tell us sooner? Like, you know, it's not as if we would do this for just anybody, but for an old Indiana chum we will gladly go the extra mile to help you "get through" our magazine.

Here then, just for you, Danny, an eminently (EM-I-NENT-LY) readable page—brought down to Quayle-speed—of subjects we've covered in recent months.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

We have published quite a few pieces on Central America. It seems that the Sandinistas . . . What's that you say? Oh, sorry, Danny. Let's take that a bit more slowly . . .

Okay now, Central America. No, Danny, not Centralia. That's in Illinois. Think hard . . . Central America. Remember the Chiquita Banana song? Sure you do. Another hint: Mexico City is the capital (C-A-P-I-T-A-L) of what country? No, Danny, not New Mexico. That's a state. Look, let's try again. In what country is the Panama Canal located?

Danny, Danny?

Hmmm. . . . What say we look at another part of the world? In April we ran an article (AR-TI-CLE) on the recent election in Canada, where. . .

No, Danny, Canada is *not* a country in Central America. Nice try, but . . . hey, let's just drop the subject of foreign affairs and move into. . . .

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

Feel a bit more comfy in this area, chum? Fine. We aim to please our very special readers. Okay, in our April issue we also ran a memoir (pronounced MEM-WAHR . . . that's French, Danny, for recalling something) by Herbert Stein. You remember Herb Stein, don't you, Danny? He's the economist . . .

What's that? You thought he owned the New York Yankees? No, Danny, that's George Stein*brenner* . . . George . . . G-E-O-R-G-E, as in . . .

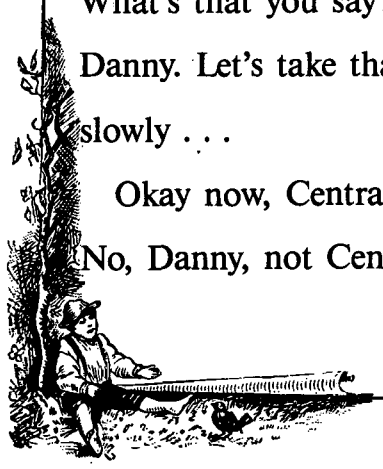
Oh well, let's try another tack. A trifle slower yet. How about . . .

Read my lips, says Danny.

It is easy to read Danny's lips because they move when he reads.

Now he is running. See Danny run. He is running up the Hill. The Hill is called Capitol Hill (that's C-A-P-I-T-*O*-L). . . .

—Ron Burr, Jenny Woodward, Denise Birkhold, and Feliks Pleszczynski (TAS's House Hoosiers)



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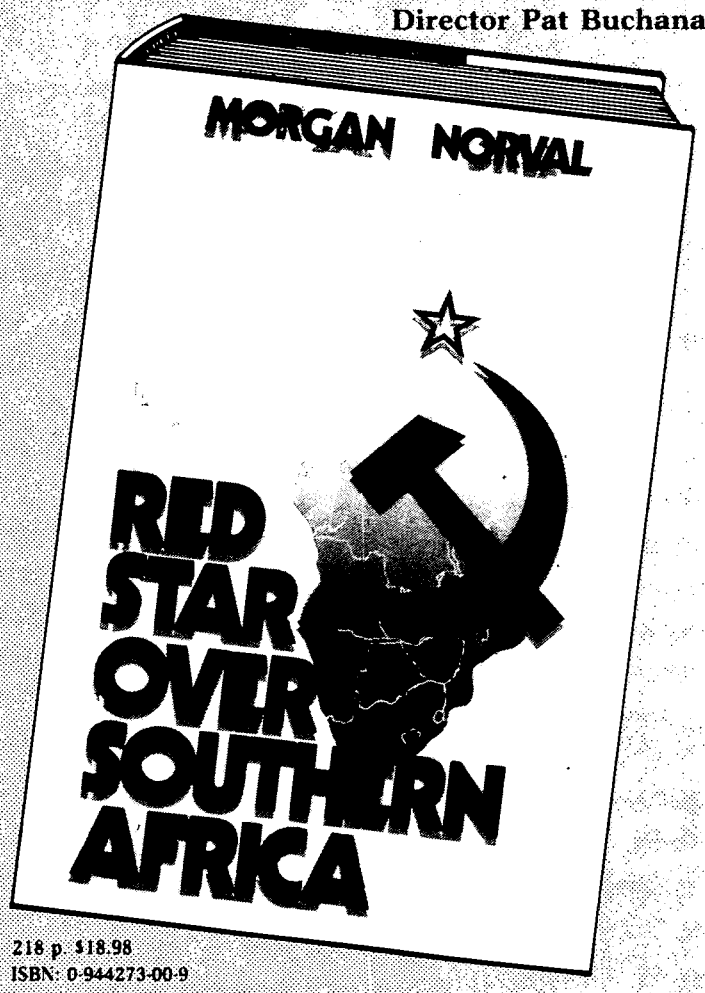
—former White House Communications Director Pat Buchanan



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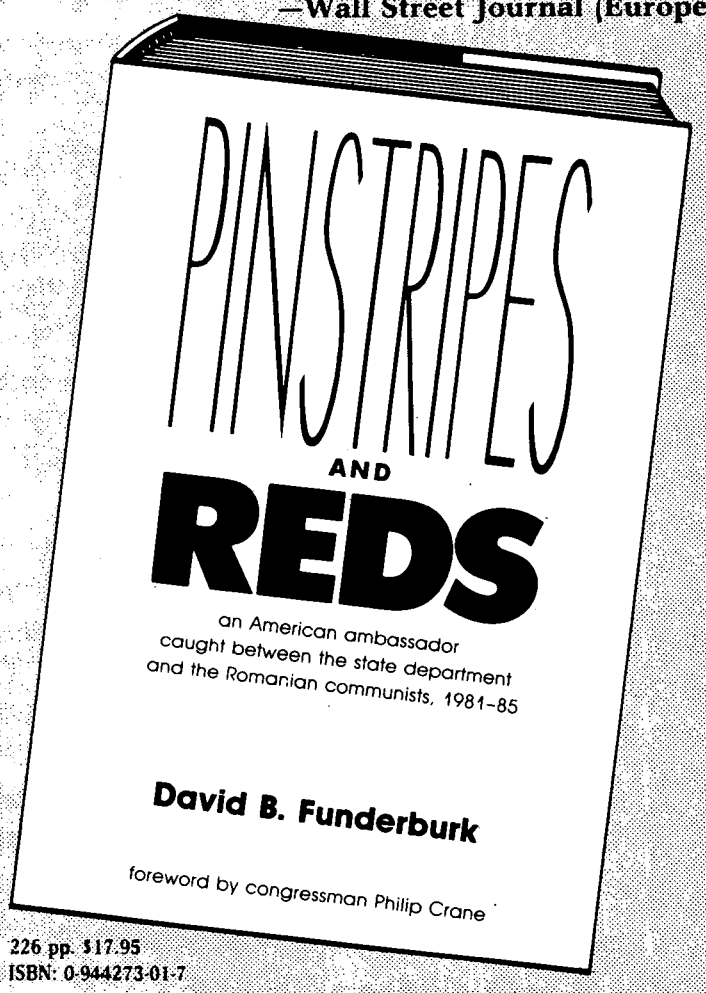

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Maurice Cranston

SHOULD WE CELEBRATE THE FRENCH REVOLUTION?

Two hundred years after its outbreak, there's no escaping the sad truth that it was all a barbaric mistake.

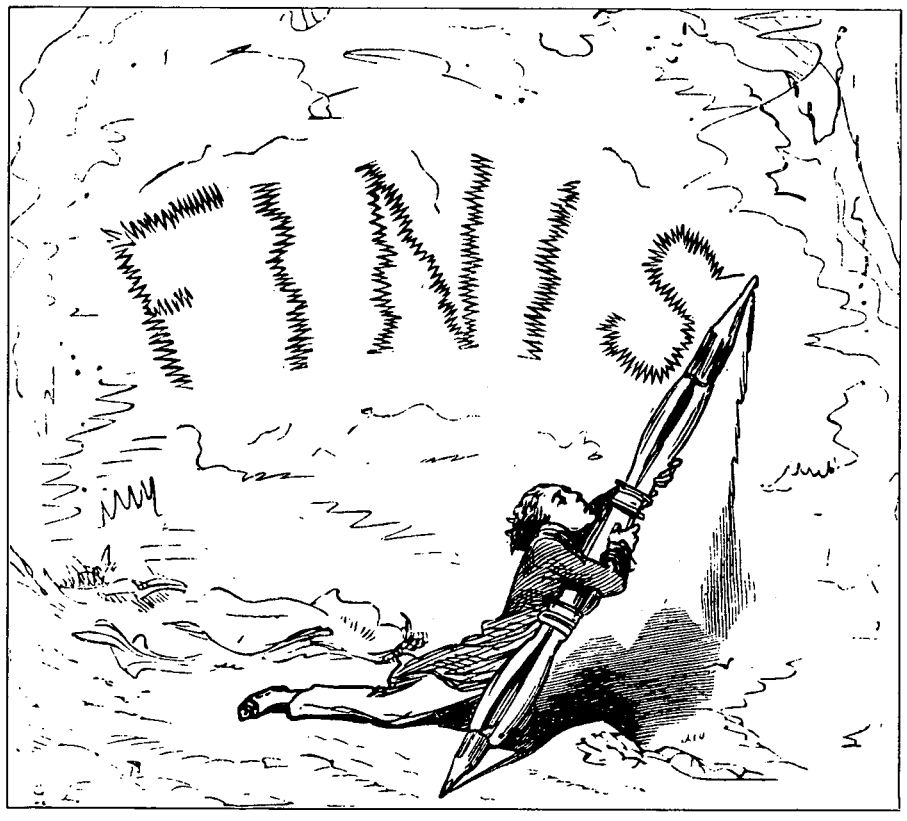
When the French Revolution broke out in 1789, George Washington declared it to be "wonderful." Jefferson said that "the liberty of the whole earth" depended on its success, and Madison, drawing a parallel between the French Revolution and America's own, spoke of "the light which is chasing darkness and despotism from the Old World" as an "emanation from that which has procured the establishment of liberty in the new." Only Alexander Hamilton, like Edmund Burke in England, refused to rejoice: "There is no real resemblance," he said, "between what was the cause of America and what is the cause of France. The difference is no less great than that between liberty and licentiousness."

The historic moment always taken to mark the outbreak of the French Revolution is the storming of the prison of the Bastille by the populace of Paris on July 14, 1789. That date has since been celebrated as France's national holiday and the bicentennial of 1789 has been made the occasion of much pomp and festivity and fireworks in Paris, with President François Mitterrand, looking more than ever like Napoleon himself, inviting all the leaders of "the free world"—and the less free world—including those whose forebears had shared Hamilton's distaste for the French Revolution, or even fought against it. However, as the Comte de Clermont, descendant of Louis XVI (who was beheaded by the revolutionists), explained his participation: "The idea is not to celebrate, but to commemorate."

The myth of the Bastille greatly exceeds the reality. When it was stormed by the mob it contained only seven prisoners, two of them insane. It had always been a very comfortable prison; the inmates were allowed to be served by their own manservants and import their own food. Prisoners were often celebrities, including Voltaire and other philosophers such as Diderot, Marmontel, and Morellet, together with a few upper-class pornographers, such as the Comte de Mirabeau and the Marquis de Sade. Literary men, being high on the list of its victims, did much to make the Bastille a place of terror in people's imaginations. After it was captured and demolished, and the governor lynched, little models of the old Bastille were sold in vast quantities and displayed in people's houses as icons of the Revolution.

It was commonly believed that, as Madison put it, the French Revolution had chased darkness and despotism from France. More precisely, it was thought that the Revolution had ended feudalism. Indeed, that is exactly what the revolutionists declared themselves to be doing when, in the National Assembly on August 4, 1789, they introduced a number of measures abolishing ancient seigneurial rights and privileges. Textbooks of history, even those used in the most seriously academic American schools, continue to repeat the assertion: "The French Revolution abolished feudalism."

It did nothing of the kind. Feudalism was abolished in the seventeenth century by the Bourbon Kings Louis XIII and Louis XIV as part of their policy of establishing an absolutist monarchy. When they tore down the fortified castles of the feudal lords throughout the countryside of France, those kings did what the Parisian mob imagined it was doing as it demolished the Bastille. When the Bourbon monarchy suppressed all private armies, forbade meetings of the Estates-General, adjourned the *parlements*, placed administration in the hands of bourgeois bureaucrats, and transformed the nobility of France from a powerful aristocracy into an effeminate set of powdered courtiers of Versailles, feudalism was well and truly terminated. Nobility was left with numerous petty privileges, but it no longer had any real rights or power by the time Louis XIV died in 1715.



The French Revolution began as a noblemen's protest movement against this absolutist monarchy. Neither George Washington nor Jefferson nor any other of the American admirers of the "wonderful" events of 1789 realized this; they thought of their French friends at the front of this action—Lafayette, Condorcet, and the rest of them—as liberals. They had known them as French volunteers who had served in the War of Independence. And did not these French revolutionaries prove their devotion to American ideals by proclaiming in Paris in August 1789 a Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen based on the declarations that had been produced in Virginia and Philadelphia a few years before? Lafayette only confirmed this belief when he sent the key to the fallen Bastille to Washington himself as "a tribute which I owe as a son to my adoptive father, as an aide-de-camp to my general, and as a missionary of liberty to its patriarch."

King Louis XVI had another conception of what was going on. He saw the leading figures in the early days of the Revolution as noblemen rather than liberals—as the Marquis de Lafayette, the Comte de Mirabeau, the Marquis de Condorcet, the Bishop de Talleyrand—and he had no doubt that their theorist, philosopher, and ideologue was the late Baron de Montesquieu, whose subversive masterpiece *De l'Esprit des lois* proclaimed the doctrine of divided sovereignty and the separation of powers between the Crown and the privileged Estates. Looking to history, the king suspected that the Revolution on his doorstep was designed to reenact the so-called Glorious Revolution in England in 1688, when the British Whig grandees had overthrown the absolutist James II to make way for a

Maurice Cranston is visiting professor of political science at the University of California, San Diego.

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monarch, William III, who was willing to share his sovereignty with them.

This conjecture of Louis XVI was not incorrect, at least for the earlier months of the French Revolution. Ever since 1715, the politically ambitious elements in the upper classes of France had been struggling under Louis XV and Louis XVI to recover the rights they had lost under the absolutism of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. The *parlements*—courts of noble magistrates with the right to approve and register the enactments of the royal government at Versailles—had been restored in 1715 and insisted, with increasing vigor, on their rights to be a legislative body. Literary men—*philosophes*, as they liked to be called—provided both the rich and their highly born with arguments with which to assault, or undermine, the authority of the king and the church. The *philosophes* of the Enlightenment—Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, D'Alembert, Turgot, Holbach, Helvetius, Morellet, Mably, Condillac—all contradicted one another in what they suggested should be done. But they all agreed that the existing system—what came to be known as the Old Regime—was no good.

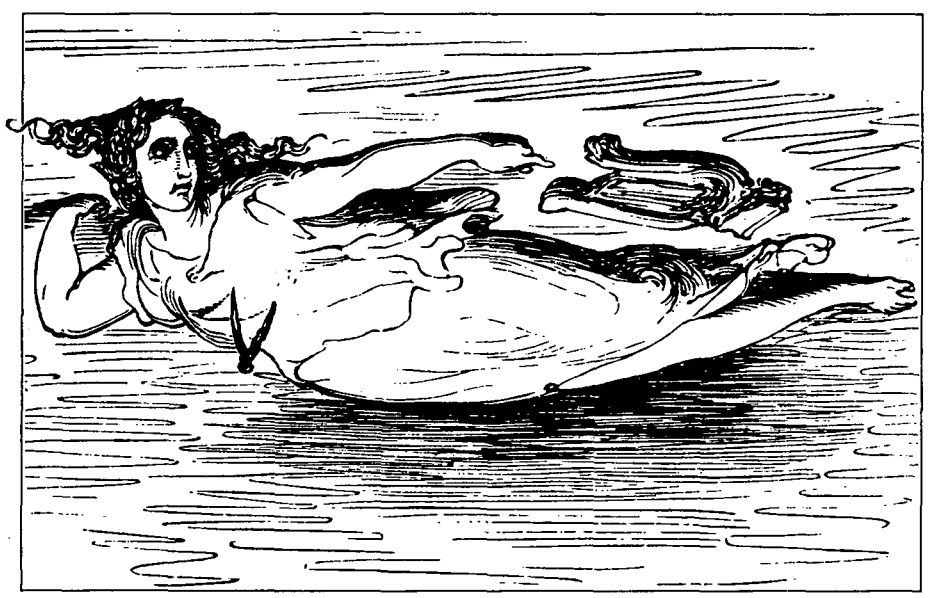
The alliance of the philosophers and the nobility put the king on his guard against both, and confirmed his suspicions that the so-called liberal aristocrats were up to the same game as the English Whigs of 1688. Had they not also enrolled their philosophers—John Locke, Algernon Sidney, James Tyndall—to show they had reason on their side, just as they had set the mob out on the streets of London hounding James II to show they had the people on their side?

Louis XVI decided he must play the part of William III to avoid the fate of James II. And he might conceivably have saved his skin if he had gone on playing the part. As it was, the French Revolution developed in directions that made it increasingly unlike England's in 1688. If Louis's conception of events was correct at the outset, it ceased to be as the Revolution developed.

Control of the Revolution passed from the liberal noblemen to more radical, bourgeois politicians. The French nobility was no longer at all like the English nobility—that is, a genuine aristocracy or ruling class of a few hundred peers with legislative power in the Houses of Parliament. It was a diffuse collection of several thousand families with titles, some old, some new, some carrying seigneurial privileges to tax exemptions or access to bishoprics and military ranks and suchlike; some carrying membership of the high judiciary *parlements*, some attached to large estates, some utterly penurious. And as a result of all this diversity, there was no social basis for an aristocratic political caucus in France on the lines of the Whigs in England. Far from keeping a grip on the French Revolution, the French nobility was soon panicked by it, and the king panicked with them. By 1791 he had decided it was no use pretending to be a constitutional monarch on the model of William III, and that it would be wisest to copy James II after all. He tried to run abroad, thereby ending all hope of the French Revolution being a "moderate" revolution like those of the English and the Americans.

The field was opened to the fanatical. Montesquieu ceased to be the Revolution's guiding light; his place was taken by Rousseau, as the champions of constitutional monarchy were replaced by the champions of republicanism. Edmund Burke, one of the most percipient observers of the French Revolution, as well as its most bitter critic, saw this coming even while Louis XVI was still on his throne and the liberal monarchist Mirabeau was still the dominant politician in the assembly. As an English Whig himself (if of Irish birth), Burke was the first to see the impossibility of the French Revolution generating the kind of measured freedom under the law that the revolution of 1688 had established in England. Burke pointed out as early as 1790 in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* that the English revolution had restored traditional English rights and institutions that the despotic innovations of James II had violated: it succeeded because it was a conservative revolution. The disastrous error of the French revolutionists, as Burke saw it, was that they had resolved to model their nation afresh according to a rationalistic design, at the same time inspiring in the people a hatred of the church and of their social superiors. This could only lead to bloodshed.

Only Alexander Hamilton refused to rejoice. "There is no real resemblance," he said, "between what was the cause of America and what is the cause of France. The difference is no less great than that between liberty and licentiousness."



Events soon proved that Burke's analysis was accurate. Class conflict was increased by the only important political institution the French state possessed besides the Crown. The Estates-General, which was convened by Louis XVI for the first time since 1614, divided representations of the nation into three houses, the first of the clergy, the second of the nobility, and the third of the commoners. And even though Louis XVI enlarged the number of members of the Third Estate from 300 to 600, while keeping the numbers of the upper houses at 300 each, the deputies in the Third Estate still balked at the thought of their resolutions being outvoted by the "privileged" orders, if those houses counted as two to the commoners' one. There was no likelihood that the Estates-General would present a united front of the kind offered by the English Parliament, in which neither House could outvote the other.

For that matter, even the privileged classes of France, as represented in the Second Estate, did not present a united front. If the more politically minded nobleman was eager to take from the king a share of the sovereignty, many others were content with the status quo and the privileges they had. France in the eighteenth century was not a bad place to live. Even Talleyrand, one of the noblemen who both launched the Revolution and stuck with it afterwards, said that people who had not experienced the Old Regime did not know "the sweetness of life." Left-wing historians have usually portrayed the France of Louis XV and Louis XVI as a nation of bankruptcy and misery, but the more thorough research of such up-to-date specialists as François Furet has led to the conclusion that life in France for most people was "happy" before the Revolution. In his magisterial study *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Tocqueville points out that it was a golden age for intellectuals and artists, who were received on equal terms in the society of the upper classes. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, spent his summers in a pavilion attached to the Chateau de Montmorency, where he was seated every day on the right of his hostess, the very grand Duchesse de Luxembourg, no matter how many dukes and marquises might be at the table.

The storming of the Bastille on July 14 is held in popular memory as the crucial date of the French Revolution, but in reality an earlier event was far more significant: the meeting of the Third Estate on June 17, 1789, when that body declared itself to be the National Assembly, the supreme legislative institution of the kingdom. Siéyès, an *abbé* of humble origins, had some months before published a best-selling pamphlet titled *What Is the Third Estate?* in which he argued that the Third Estate alone represented the nation as a whole; the two upper houses, he said, represented only the vested interests of privileged sections of the nation. Voltaire had expressed much the same opinion about the upper houses years before, as part of his criticism of the Estates-General as an institution. But Siéyès was original, and immensely influential, in claiming for the Third Estate the right to act alone, not even as one of two chambers like Parliament in England or Congress in the United States, but entirely and exclusively as the national legislative body. Siéyès did not speak of "representative democracy," but that was what he wanted; and the unprivileged classes of France saw it as such, so that the cry of "Long live the Third Estate" was heard in the streets of Paris when members of the Third Estate, after being instructed by the king to disperse, refused to do so.

It was at this point that John Adams

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in America uttered his guarded criticism of the French revolutionists, to the effect that a single-chamber legislature was unlikely to provide the checks and balances necessary to restrain the excesses of democracy. But "checks and balances" went out of fashion in the French Revolution together with Montesquieu, the great exponent of the doctrine that despotism could only be prevented if multiple centers of power checked the despotic tendencies of one another. Rousseau, coming to the forefront as Montesquieu's star dwindled, never believed in "checks and balances" any more than he believed in divided sovereignty; he argued that the people should yield sovereignty to no one, but keep it integral and whole in their own hands. "The sovereignty of the nation"—a doctrine that the Third Estate, now the National Assembly, asserted on behalf of France—came straight from Rousseau.

It was clearly a doctrine incompatible with the sovereignty of the king, and one cannot regard as unintelligent the decision of Louis XVI on June 20, 1791, to slip secretly into exile—in effect to follow the example of James II and accept the loss of his throne. But he was unlucky; unmasked and arrested at Varennes, and accused of plotting with exiled noblemen to head a counterrevolution, he soon met the fate not of James II but of Charles I. His death on the scaffold signaled the transformation of his kingdom into a republic: not a republic of the kind framed by the constitutional conclave at Philadelphia in 1787, but of the kind outlined by Rousseau in the pages of his book *The Social Contract*.

Nevertheless, the experience of the American Revolution led the French revolutionists to do what Rousseau had deemed impossible—that is, to institute a republic in something larger than a city-state, a republic composed of millions of citizens. But whereas the Americans followed Montesquieu's advice and secured their liberty by checks and balances, the French followed Rousseau's doctrine and invoked the general will of the people as the basis of the law, leaving to elected ministers the duty of declaring what the law commanded. This enabled the most persuasive orators to become in effect dictators, and from the setting up of the Committee of Public Safety in April 1793 there was really only one dictator, Maximilien Robespierre.

Robespierre constantly invoked the name of Rousseau in his innumerable speeches, and he genuinely felt that he was enacting Rousseau's program for republican government by "forcing men to be free"—even as he had them beheaded. Robespierre was a fastidious man; as a young lawyer he had resigned from the bench rather than condemn a criminal to death. When, as a revolutionary dictator, he sent hundreds to the guillotine, he always protested that he did so in a spirit of fraternal love and moral solicitude for the well-being of the nation. The guillotine to him was a surgical instrument, used to cut off the moral gangrene from the social body of France; it was not an instrument of capital punishment.

Robespierre found many outside France to condone his policy. He quoted Jefferson, saying, "The liberty of the whole world was depending on the issues of the contest, and was ever such a prize ever won with so little innocent blood?" We of the twentieth century can hardly be shocked at this, considering that Stalin, who defended his purge of "party traitors" and "enemies of the people" in 1937 on the analogy of Robespierre's procedures, was certainly not criticized for doing so by Franklin Roosevelt or any other leading Western liberal—even though Stalin's victims were thousands of times more numerous than Robespierre's. Moreover, it must be said that Stalin's purges were, from his own point of view, more successful; he died in his bed after nearly thirty years of undisputed power, whereas Robespierre was executed on July 27, 1794, after only fifteen months in command of the French Revolution, on the same guillotine to which he had sent his victims.

The fall of Robespierre was followed by four years of fairly moderate, even dull republican government. The "stars" of the early years of the Revolution had gone: Mirabeau died a natural death, Lafayette immigrated to Germany, Condorcet died mysteriously in custody, Marat was assassinated; Robespierre's rivals Danton, Desmoulins, and Herbert were guillotined together with the king's left-wing cousin the Duc d'Orleans, who changed his name to Philippe Egalité (which made Robespierre the more determined to exterminate him). Tom Paine, the one American elected to the Convention, was only too relieved to exchange imprisonment for exile.

There remained to lead the Revolution only men as unscrupulous as Talleyrand or as cowardly as Siéyès or as boring as Carnot, Barras, and La Revelliére-Lepeaux, who were fairly easily brushed aside by the upstart military genius from Corsica, Napoleon, who turned the republic into an empire. There was, of course, a precedent for this: the ancient Romans changed their republic into an empire when their dominions got to be too big for republican institutions to work effectively. The French had begun to look upon themselves as the Romans of the modern world almost as soon as they had sent Louis XVI to the scaffold. They imitated Roman art and architecture, and used Roman names for their police as well as their military ranks. They even called their chief magistrates "consuls," which made it seem only logical for Napoleon, as their elected First Consul, to proclaim himself their emperor. He lost nothing in popularity by doing so. He was a people's emperor, much more loved than the dismal republican government he replaced.

The alliance of the philosophers and the nobility put the king on his guard against both, and confirmed his suspicions that the so-called liberal aristocrats were up to the same game as the English Whigs in 1688.

He was also, in his own rough way, a man of the Enlightenment. The constitutional monarchists of 1789 read Montesquieu, and the republicans of 1793 read Rousseau; Napoleon read Voltaire, and he came as close as anyone to realizing Voltaire's project of enlightened absolutist government. Voltaire had never seen any contradiction between liberty and an absolutist ruler, provided that ruler used his power to promote the public welfare and ensure the freedom of the press. Indeed, Voltaire believed that all the obstacles to progress and free speech were the traditional privileged orders, like the courts and the church; and that a truly powerful monarch, with the will to suppress such reactionary forces, was the best hope for mankind's liberty.

Napoleon did much to introduce Voltairian ideas into his empire. He codified the laws; he set up scientific academies and learned societies, university faculties and public schools. He did much to promote the diffusion of technical knowledge. At least in his earliest months of power he patronized philosophy as well as science and technology. Voltaire would not have approved of the way Napoleon went on to re-establish the Catholic Church, or his military adventures; but he could not have failed to recognize in Napoleon a disciple of a kind. Besides, Voltaire was a strong French patriot, and he would have admired Napoleon's theatricality and his rhetorical assertions of the glory of France.

Some textbooks suggest that the French Revolution ended when Napoleon seized imperial power on November 9, 1799; but this is to deny the substance of Napoleon's achievement in perpetuating the most solid innovations of the Revolution. If he was a despot, he was a popular despot, who acknowledged the people's will as his only title to legitimacy. His government may either be thought of as propelling France toward democracy, or giving the French a taste for populist leadership as an alternative to democracy—making Napoleon the forerunner of Napoleon III and Charles de Gaulle and even Pétain.

Few people today would use Washington's word "wonderful" for the whole of the French Revolution, if only because it assumed such conflicting forms between 1789 and 1815, and parts of it were terrible. And of course they are remembered as being terrible. The British Museum in London recently had to dismantle a model of the guillotine it had erected as part of an exhibition to commemorate 1789. It was judged to be too frightening for women and children. An age that can contemplate with equanimity the revolutionary atrocities of the Soviets in Russia and the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia is unnerved by the thought of well-groomed heads being severed from their bodies by a machine! The actual number of the guillotine's victims in Paris is calculated at 2,690, a very few when we think of the numbers who have perished in the revolutionary purges of the twentieth century. Napoleon sent many more to death in battle, of course, but again, his casualties seem minimal compared to those of our two world wars.

Even so, the French Revolution is not really an event to celebrate; and if we join the Comte de Clermont in "commemorating" it, one might still wish it had not been commemorated so many times already, by revolutionists who have tried to imitate it. Lenin spoke of his Bolsheviks as the heirs of the French revolutionists, hoping to capture for his movement the prestige and the glamour that historians had conferred on the events of 1789 to 1815. Later revolutionists followed Lenin's example. It could fairly be said that two of the revolutions that anteceded the French—1688 in England and 1776 in America—did good for mankind but those that came afterwards, especially the more recent ones—in Russia, China, and Cuba, for example—have done untold and undeniable harm. □

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Joe Mysak

THE BEAUTY OF MUNICIPAL BONDS

In fact, they're so attractive that Congress is now thinking about doing them in through whopping new taxation. So much for federal concern with crumbling infrastructures.

Get ready for another whack at tax reform. When even House Republicans talk about another tax bill, you can believe that there will be another one coming. And, under the right pressure to find "revenue-raisers," Congress is capable of "just about anything" this time around, say lobbyists, which might mean the end of tax-exempt municipal bonds, under fire for most of this decade.

Municipal bonds are boring and, with a few exceptions, nice: the financial equivalent of the girl next door. Simply put, municipal bonds are the securities sold by municipalities (the term includes everything from a village or specially created authority to a state) to fund the construction of roads, bridges, schools, housing, reservoirs, and sewers, among other things. The municipalities borrow the money for periods ranging from a few months to thirty years or more. When the federal income tax was born in 1913, interest on the issues was exempted based on the principle of "reciprocal immunity"—the federal government did not tax the interest on the bonds sold by municipalities, and the municipalities did not tax the interest on the bonds sold by the federal government. The tax-exemption means that municipalities save at least two points—200 basis points, in bond jargon—more on their borrowings than do corporations, which sell taxable debt.

You would think that such instruments would be natural for conservatives to defend. Then again, you would also think that the "New Federalism," when introduced by Ronald Reagan eight years ago, meant that municipalities would be left alone, and even encouraged, to finance whatever they need on their own. On both counts, you would be wrong. Tax-exempt bonds are nobody's child, despite all the lip service you hear paid to America's invariably "crumbling" infrastructure.

The new outrages on the tax-exempt bond market will come in a number of ways. The first will entail a package of outright regulations on the marketplace, with the seemingly not so subtle intent of punishing rich investment bankers and bond lawyers—although it will be said that such regulations are being used to raise revenues. The second, and far more insidious, reform will be disguised as a shutdown of one of the last "loopholes" available to the rich. The third will be killing tax-exempts altogether.

Conservatives may be naturally averse to anything "public." But if, as Fred Barnes has commented in these pages, conservatives have to get it through their thick skulls that Americans like big government, it seems that it would be far better to keep as much of that government as possible at the state level. The alternative is the continued centralization in Washington of whatever power the states have left. Many in Congress have already been led to believe that tax-exemption is just one more inefficient form of federal handout, and they are more than eager to take over distribution of the cash.

And this can amount to a tidy sum. In 1981, when I started covering the municipal market, the sleepy days were still with us. Municipalities sold $67.86 billion in securities, both long and short term. But, fueled at every stage by the creativity of investment bankers seeking to outwit tax law, by tax reform, or by justifiable fears of tax reform, the total grew to $132.95 billion in 1984 and a record $223.45 billion in 1985, when fears of whatever Congress was cooking up in its tax reform act created a stampede to market.

As it turned out, the stampede was justified. The Tax Reform Act of 1986 was a comprehensive document that tightened the screws and precisely limited what municipal issuers could do. They could no longer sell tax-exempt securities to finance construction of parking garages, stadiums, convention centers, and industrial parks. Nor could they sell tax-exempt bonds if more than 10 percent of the proceeds were to be used for the benefit of private corporations. The amount of student-loan, industrial-development, and housing bonds they could sell was also limited by a formula based on population.

The tax code also set up a blinding array of rules governing such market esoterica as how much issuers could pay printers, lawyers, and investment bankers to put certain kinds of bond issues together. It also stipulated how quickly they would have to spend the money they raised by selling bonds, and eliminated any investment earnings they might make on money they did not immediately use—in other words, under the new law, if you sold bonds and paid your investors seven percent interest, you could not turn around and invest the money in bonds sold by the U.S. Treasury and carrying a nine percent yield.

The new law also eliminated certain deductions taken by banks and insurance companies when they buy bonds. The icing on the cake was the placement of a tax on the interest of certain issues, thereby making hitherto "tax-exempt" bonds taxable. (But more on the deviltry toward investors, the "buy-side" of the market, later on.)

The part of tax reform dedicated to municipal finance thus served to make miserable the lives of issuers—meaning the people in a score of such organizations as the National Association of State Treasurers, the Government Finance Officers Association, the National League of Cities, and the Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities. They had to set up allocation systems to decide who would get how much of their state's now-limited industrial-development, student-loan, and

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housing bonds, and they had to set up new accounting procedures to track arbitrage earnings. In 1986, the amount of tax-exempt bonds and notes sold dropped precipitously, to $162.65 billion, and further, to $114.16 billion in 1987.

The result of all of tax reform's sausage-making last time was precious little, at least when it comes to bringing in the cash, and depending on who cooks the numbers. The Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation, for example, figured restrictions on the bond market would raise a paltry $695 million of tax revenues over five years. The Treasury, meanwhile, where so many good tax ideas originate when they do not come out of Congress's tax-writing committees, put the figure closer to $7.4 billion, over the same five years. This is not an extravagant sum to be tossed into the federal coffers, either way, especially if you consider the implications for municipal budgets.

John McEvoy, director of the National Council of State Housing Agencies and former staff director of the Senate Budget Committee, is a familiar figure on the municipal bond speakers' circuit, and what he says carries some weight. "It's not over," he predicted last January. "Be wary of Treasury and congressional staffers assuring you that there is no agenda of bond-bashing. Before tax rates are increased, all tax preferences will be hit hard."

As a matter of fact, one top congressional staffer did assure me this year that bonds were not on the agenda "in any substantive way—in strictly marginal ways, perhaps. You never get any significant gain in revenues from bond curbs—you gain the revenue strictly over time." This is why you have to figure getting that $695 million, or $7.4 billion, over five years.

Mr. McEvoy, however, still sticks by his guns. "The size and character of the tax bill will determine the size and character of the hit," he says. The more technical prohibitions that might be put forth in the second half of the year concern "cost of issuance": for example, an arbitrary limit (two percent) on how much municipalities may pay to cover costs attendant to the sale of their bonds (printing, legal fees, and so forth) to all bonds, not just those being used to subsidize "private activities." Another possibility is a limit on 501 (c)(3) bonds, or those issued for private, nonprofit entities, like hospitals and colleges.

"The stuff to limit cost of issuance is just a drive to get what they perceive as the fat cats," says McEvoy. "The investment bankers have to demonstrate that what they're doing is worth the money, and that what the cities and towns are doing is worth the money." No doubt congressmen think they are helping municipalities when they tell them that they cannot pay more than an arbitrarily selected amount for certain services. The truth of the matter, however, is that the municipalities might well be forced to sell a small portion of a bond issue—a tail, if you will—carrying higher, taxable yields, to pay those costs.

"Beware of Treasury and congressional staffers assuring you that there is no agenda of bond-bashing."

Ah, the fat cats. As another congressional staffer once put it, "You [bond] guys are your own worst enemies." In 1985, when investment bankers stormed Capitol Hill, the pols, including Sen. Bob Packwood in an unforgettable outburst, could do little but sputter about "these *rich*, a handful of the *richest* law firms" and so on, apparently mistaking the investment bankers and bond lawyers who work in public finance for the high rollers in merger and acquisition work.

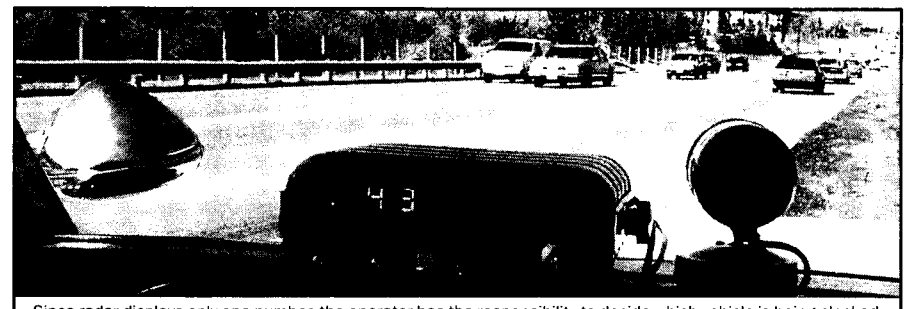
For the fact is that while these bond boys do put some pretty nice numbers on the board, theirs, for the most part, is not the wealth of, say, Sherman McCoy in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. I don't know of many other industries where the top firm in the business suddenly decided to quit because the business was not lucrative enough, which is what happened in October 1987, when Salomon Brothers opted out—one week before the stock market crash. Competition is such in the municipal market today that more than one exasperated banker has said to me, "I don't know how anyone is making money underwriting bonds today."

You can, of course, make a nice living doing so. But when the bond lawyers of the National Association of Bond Lawyers, and the investment bankers in the Public Securities Association (PSA), showed up on Capitol Hill in 1985, congressmen saw red. They had all the numbers, all right, but they were, remember, "*these, these rich*" Wall Streeters. To talk about the benefits of tax-exempt finance was, in the mindset of those in the Imperial Congress, not only confusing and boring, but also self-serving. In the past couple of years, however, the bankers have gotten a little cannier, and now provide the issuers, who themselves are now a little angrier, with the ammunition to put together a decent lobbying effort. If the PSA goes to Washington and tells congressmen that what they're doing is wrecking the ability of municipalities to build schools, it means one thing. If a state treasurer, or a mayor, or a governor goes to the Capitol and, using the PSA statistics, starts yelling about the evils befalling the constituency back home, it is quite another matter.

The staffers who come up with new prohibitions this year will talk about more than just raising revenue. They will also talk about abuses in the $729 billion (outstanding debt) municipal bond market. For those with a taste for the obscure, these include the $2.25 billion Washington Public Power Supply System (WPPSS) bond default in 1983, the biggest ever; and at least $50 billion in sham bond deals put together in 1985 and 1986 (one of them a $300 million bond issue designed for housing—on the Pacific island of Guam), currently under investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Before you're sold on the evils of top-hatted investment bankers who regularly dine on the babes of the poor, consider that the WPPSS default (recently settled with bondholders for a little less than fifty cents on the dollar) was created by a Washington State court decision that voided a batch of municipal contracts. And as for the sham deals and other abuses—usually having to do with super-aggressive salesmen in boiler rooms selling questionable bonds to widows and orphans—these are the kinds of things handled not by Congress but by the SEC, the Internal Revenue Service, the Treasury Department, the National Association of Securities Dealers, and the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board.

The most "conservative" approach



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to tax reform was concocted by the Treasury in 1984, which suggested at its core a semi-flat tax with a top marginal rate of 35 percent, and proposed weeding out virtually all public financing designed to help private interests, which, among other things, would do away with public airport authorities building terminals for Delta Airlines, and Harvard selling tax-exempt bonds for new dormitories. The amount of financing done would have been cut by two-thirds. Even the House and Senate considered this a tad too dramatic.

Under that early Treasury proposal, traditional, governmental, public-purpose financing would have been retained. The big buzzword this year—as in recent years—is infrastructure, and how much municipalities will have to spend to repair what they call their physical plant. "Infrastructure financing" is being used as a shield, and wrongly, by some market participants to defend *all* public finance. But the fact is, only about one-sixth of the debt sold last year ($19.89 billion out of about $116 billion sold) actually went toward infrastructure, and nearly all of it would have been allowed, because it was all traditional, governmental, and public-purpose.

The National Council on Public Works Improvement suggested last October that such spending would just about have to double to keep up with the need. Infrastructure, as defined by the council, includes roads, bridges, mass transit, airports, and water, sewer, and solid waste plants. So if the tax-exempt bond market were used to finance infrastructure needs exclusively, it might only amount to $40 billion or so a year.

But using infrastructure as the argument for why bonds are good things is as specious as the argument for eliminating all so-called private-activity bonds. Any conservative, nonpartisan defense of tax-exempt bonds is based on the fact that at certain points during this century it was decided that it was good public policy to sell tax-exempt bonds for a *variety* of purposes, including prisons, stadiums, housing, advance refunding for interest rate savings, pollution-control equipment for factories, and a host of private projects.

Those matters of good public policy were not decided by judges, or federal legislatures, or unelected aides to those legislators; they were decided at the hometown level, and usually by referendum. To declare that now, for some reason, the locals shouldn't decide what they should and should not finance smacks of the worst sort of Inside-the-Beltway elitism.

So much for the proposed curbs. Another idea apparently circulating in Washington—although this is publicly (and vehemently) denied by the Treasury and almost everyone else—is an assault on the buyers of tax-exempt bonds: a limit on how much tax-free income any one taxpayer might deduct from gross income.

"They're going to target the buyside," says Austin V. Koenen, a managing director at Shearson Lehman Hutton Inc. and vice chairman of the PSA. In Washington the argument is sometimes made that municipal securities are a tax haven exclusively used by the richest five percent of the population. The argument is spurious on the face of it, but symptomatic of a certain mentality. A recent Internal Revenue Service study showed that tax-exempt securities are held by taxpayers of all incomes, not just "the rich." One-third of the taxpayers who reported receiving tax-exempt interest in 1987 had annual incomes of less than $50,000; only 35 percent of those who reported receiving such interest had incomes of more than $100,000. But Congress, as one staffer told me, "has a natural prejudice against anyone who has money."

There is, moreover, the prospect of Congress doing away with tax-exemption altogether. As House Speaker Jim Wright told some investment bankers and issuers last year, "Everything is fair game," including killing altogether the tax-exemption that issuers enjoy. Kindly, Speaker Wright added: "It's nothing personal."

The bankers and issuers have risen to the occasion on this one, surprisingly enough, because they know that this is where the battle will be joined. Last April, in a little-heralded decision (of course, it was big news for us at the *Bond Buyer*—but then again, we also get excited talking about the Minnesota 50 percent coupon and the definition of Canadian Interest Cost), the Supreme Court decided that the 1982 *South Carolina* v. *Baker* case challenging the mandatory registration of the owners of tax-exempt bonds. The court found that registration of bond owners was constitutional, and then unexpectedly threw out the 1895 *Pollock* v. *Farmers' Loan & Trust Co.* case, which gave birth to the doctrine of reciprocal immunity. The court said in no uncertain terms that states have no constitutional right to sell bonds that are tax-exempt. While Congress and the Treasury had been making laws pretty much disregarding the "precedent," the constitutional safeguard argument was always there—sort of a security blanket for the market.

The Court's decision was 7-1, with Justice Sandra Day O'Connor dissenting in words that may serve as a battle cry for municipalities. Justice O'Connor wrote in her dissent, "If Congress may tax the interest paid on state and local bonds, it may strike at the very heart of state and local governmental activities," and increase their dependence on the federal government. She concluded: "The Court has failed to enforce the constitutional safeguards of state autonomy and self-sufficiency that may be found in the Tenth Amendment and the Guarantee Clause, as well as in the principles of federalism implicit in the Constitution." What Justice O'Connor marked, then, was a fundamental change in constitutional philosophy—that all good, and all benefits, devolve from the State.

You would think that the "New Federalism," when introduced by Ronald Reagan eight years ago, meant that municipalities would be left alone, and even encouraged, to finance whatever they need on their own.

At the time, Christopher A. Taylor, the executive director of the Municipal Securities Rulemaking Board, said that municipal issuers "have now been put on the same footing as other recipients of tax breaks. They will have to get in line with the others to argue their case for continuing to receive special treatment. . . . Congress will be hunting for added revenues next year, and I'm afraid this means that tax-exempt bonds will be like a plump duck flying over the hunting grounds."

Issuers and their organizations, and the PSA, have stepped up their lobbying efforts on this point, for it goes to the heart of the industry. PSA estimates that if tax-exemption were removed, it would cost issuers $264 billion extra in interest costs between now and the year 2000. Accordingly, three states have already passed resolutions for a constitutional amendment to guarantee the tax-exemption of their municipal bonds, and another three are considering them. And in January, Sen. William Roth, Jr. of Delaware reintroduced his proposal for a constitutional amendment to prevent the federal government from taxing the interest earned on governmental bonds used for public purposes, a proposal narrower than asking for a constitutional guarantee on states' rights to tax-exemption, but at least a move for some protection. These are glimmers in otherwise bleak days.

Perhaps the real ace in the hole for the partisans of tax-exemption is in the White House, in the person of the President's chief of staff. John Sununu, when he was governor, presided quietly over what was never referred to as the New Hampshire miracle, although unlike the one across the border in Massachusetts it is still in full vigor. He succeeded not only in cutting the state's deficit, but also in getting its credit rating upgraded. He's come to Wall Street to see bond rating agencies and make his case, and now that he has the President's ear, Sununu may be the point man for states' rights to tax-exemption, for the simple reason that he understands what it all means.

Congressmen, with a few notable exceptions, don't have the foggiest idea about what tax-exempt bonds are—even if they hold them in their own portfolios. And the bond provisions written by tax staffers are generally so complicated, and make up such a small part of any tax bill, that it isn't until the telephones start ringing off the hook that they pay much attention to what they might be approving. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, for example, a successful politician savvy in the ways of running cities, knocked a draconian measure to tax all bonds out of a Senate tax package a few years ago—but only after its more damaging aspects were called to his attention in an agonized outcry by New York issuers and dealers.

Ignorance of municipal bonds in general, and their benefits in particular, is nonpartisan. Republican Senator Packwood, to repeat, is no friend of tax-exemption. Nor is Democrat Rep. Dan Rostenkowski. Rep. Brian Donnelly, Democrat of Massachusetts, whose ADA rating is creeping ever higher, is a member of the House Ways and Means Committee and author of some nasty bond curbs on the docket this year; yet Sen. John F. Kerry of the same state, whose political bona fides are well known, five years ago gave one of the most effective speeches on the need to preserve tax-exemption. It was, I later learned, drafted for him by an investment banker.

So get ready for another whack at tax reform. If the Congress is not concerned, or is too busy to learn about what the tax-exempt issue really is all about—the reallocation of local power to the federal government—we could see unelected gnomes on tax committees and in the Treasury and the IRS deciding who will get a municipal swimming pool, and who will get their roads paved. □

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Russell Seitz

THE CUP THAT RAN AMOK

New York State Supreme Court Justice Ciparek's recent ruling that awarded the America's Cup to the loser from New Zealand not only violated the spirit of the yachting competition but ignored the leading role technology has always played in the event.

If the episode had not occurred, it would have been necessary for the producers of "Dallas" to invent it: a high-rolling Kiwi investment banker comes down with America's Cup fever. He launches an antipodean Spar Wars project, only to see his acromegalic superscow blown away 2-0 by a cross between a giant Hobie cat and a pterodactyl on steroids. Whereupon a lady judge 200 miles from blue water awards him the cup by default. Dorothy, we're not in Newport anymore.

Some 130 years before the fact, a syndicate operating out of a fledgling yacht club situated in the Elysian Fields (a.k.a. Hoboken) across the Hudson from its eponymous city made a momentous decision. Commodore Stevens and his friends decided to take on the British Empire. They believed that the designer of the Port of New York's sharpest and fastest pilot schooners could build a vessel capable of overhauling the pride of the Royal Yacht Squadron. They were right, and returned from Cowes bearing not the $10,000 or so they'd hoped to win by wagering on the races, but a truly awful piece of Victorian silverware.

To win the 100 Guineas Cup of the All Nations Race, *America* had defeated vessels of double her displacement and sail area. In the twenty-three consecutive defenses of their trophy that followed, the New York Yacht Club had to take on challengers of all shapes and sizes. Some of these "matches" included *Genesta* (80 tons/7,150 sq. ft. of sail) versus *Puritan* (140 tons/7,982 sq. ft.) and *Livonia* (280 tons/18,153 sq. ft.) versus *Sappho* (310 tons/9,060 sq. ft.). The British (and occasionally the Canadians) were nothing if not consistent. They showed up by turns with twice the sail area or half the displacement of various defending yachts and still succeeded in losing all of the first seven challenges.

Only as the end of the nineteenth century drew near was it tacitly agreed that, rather than a race like the free-for-all at Cowes that started things, a confrontation of boats that were of about the same size was more seemly. On the first such occasion, the challenger and defender were of identical waterline length and only one ton apart. On the second, in 1895, Britain's *Valkyrie III* and designer Nathaniel (the Wizard of Bristol) Herreshoff's *Defender* looked like peas in a pod, but, from the rail to the waterline, beneath her fair white paint, *Defender* was made of something newfangled called "aluminum"! A beaten Lord Dunraven stalked off in a snit, but corrosion was to be the ultimate victor—a year later Herreshoff's galvanic nightmare of bronze, wrought iron, and aluminum fell apart. Nevertheless, it was but one of his seven consecutive winning designs, spanning the years from 1893 to 1920.

The 140-foot-long, fifteen-story high J-boats converged on unity of design as the twentieth century wore on. The J-class international rule, like that governing today's 12-meters, was developmental. Fixed maximum dimensions and various trade-offs placed further emphasis on sophistication of materials and design. Tactical skills and seamanship reached unprecedentedly high levels. But within the rules' constraints, the challengers continued to lose not just every match, but almost every race.

The New York Yacht Club was finally given a good scare in 1934 by *Endeavor*. Her skipper, T.O.M. Sopwith (as in Camel, who died earlier this year in the 104th year of his age), won the first two of a four-wins-takes-all series. Whereupon Herreshoff the younger appeared on the scene to retune the defending *Rainbow*'s rigging. Having recovered their equilibrium, the NYYC afterguard won the next four straight. A collective sigh of relief was heard from Newport to Northeast Harbor. But Sopwith was unflappable. He returned to England and in three years was back with a manifestly faster J-boat, *Endeavor II*. New York countered with *Ranger*. The result was a fiasco; Sopwith lost four straight races, one by eighteen minutes.

But as war intervened and austerity consigned the big boats to all but oblivion, it became apparent that in the postwar environment towering vessels requiring professional crews of dozens of sailors to carry out the orders of the helmsmen and tactician were beyond the means of challenging and defending syndicates alike. There was a general consensus that sailing as an amateur sport was more wholesome than the extravagant deployment of hired manpower the big old boats demanded. Symptomatic of this Corinthian revival was the earliest postwar defense, sailed in 12-meter (roughly 60 foot/30 ton) sloops. This international rule was, at least in its early days, no more complicated in its execution than the rules that govern off-shore racing.

A wooden 12-meter was (and is) arguably a "family" boat; in the early fifties, one could be built for less than $100,000. They can be sailed (not raced) by a half-dozen people. The point was proved by *Easterner*, built for the Hoveys of Marblehead, who, with some friends, campaigned unsuccessfully for the right to defend against some higher-tech 12-meters. One of them, *Columbia*, was chosen in 1958 to revive the fight for the Cup. Out of Britain appeared *Sceptre*; she was destined to continue the tradition of the sixteenth challenger. Like *Endeavor II*, she lost four races in a row by margins of seven to twelve minutes. →

Russell Seitz, an associate of Harvard's Center for International Affairs, has covered the America's Cup for Scientific American. *This piece is dedicated to the memory of the late Philip Weld, victor of the 1980 Observer Singlehanded Trans-Atlantic Race.*

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By the late sixties, 12s had evolved in sophistication. It was a time of wooden ships and, to augment the efforts of the iron men, titanium masttops liberally stiffened with beryllium. New York and NASA made common cause as 12-meters sailed into the Space Age. Aluminum hulls reappeared, this time monolithic and corrosion-proof. Then-exotic (and expensive) aerospace composite materials appeared in the rigging.

Although the period was host to the construction of a 236-foot three-masted schooner sporting 60 tons of depleted uranium as high-density ballast (she was, no kidding, built for the transatlantic single-handed race!), 12-meter technology was kept reined in. The seventies saw new rules to exclude materials heavier than lead from the ballast and those of "astronomical cost" throughout. Likewise nothing "less dense than aluminum" could be used in the hull plating. These rules were honored more in the breach than in the observance. Aluminum alloys of dubiously low density were already in use. Grandfather clauses allowed the venerable *Intrepid* to keep her high-tech mast top and remain competitive enough, with some alteration, to successfully defend twice in a row. The odds against the defense continuing its unbroken line of success now stood, on a coin-toss basis, at two to the twentieth power—worse than a million to one. Talk about sailor's luck!

With the advent of the twenty-second defender, *Courageous* (1974), it was generally thought that the performance envelope of 12-meters had pretty much been reached. The limits of human ingenuity and the constraints of the allowed materials of construction were being strained. Attempts at radical departure from *Courageous* lines produced only reductions in performance. The 12s had evolved over six generations to a level of hydrodynamic sleekness that a killer whale might envy. They left no more wake than a large dinghy.

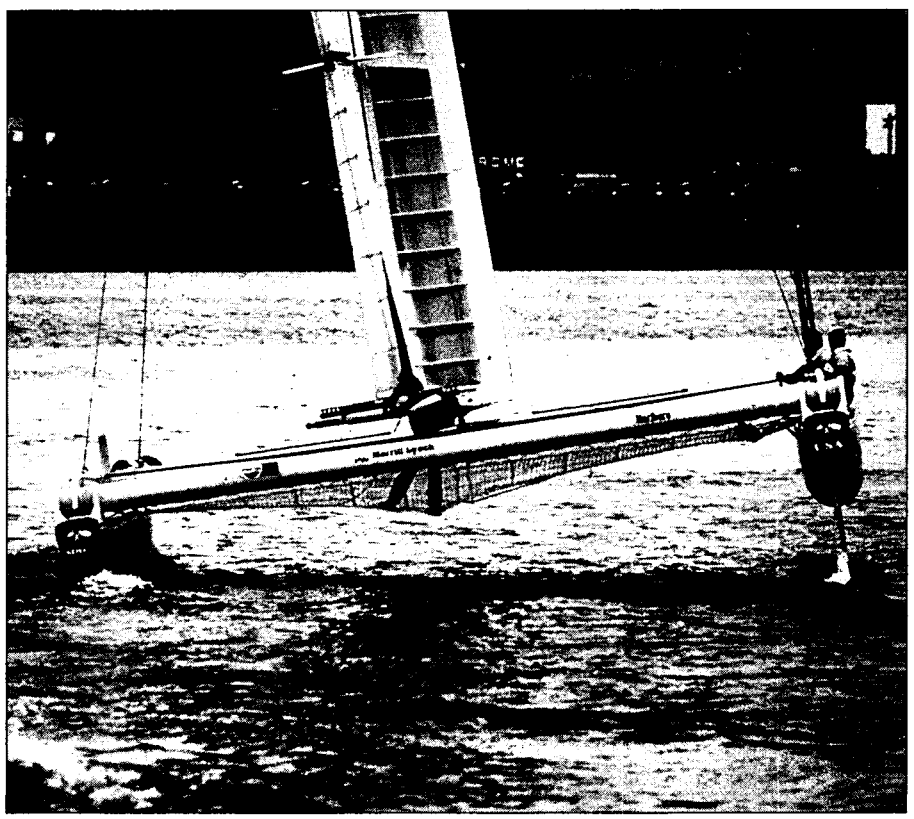
Computers, however, using finite element modeling, can go beyond what marine architects traditionally do. As tow tank testing of models and supercomputers co-evolved into the eighties, new possibilities swam dimly into view.

For the first time in history, somebody has been awarded a yachting trophy for losing races while sailing a slower boat.

But from New York's perspective, even though the odds against continuing their century-long winning streak were growing astronomical, the system was working. They had become used to winning races even in slow boats by a combination of meticulous teamwork, perfect sail handling, aggressive tactics, and, on occasion, by the tacticians' superior knowledge of the vagaries of Newport's fluky microclimate or the skipper's sheer force of will.

So when the Australians came back for the fifth time in 1983 with designer Ben Lexcen's masterpiece, a keel that bifurcated into stubby wings at the bottom and whose lead edge sloped in the wrong direction, New York declined to take them to court and accepted instead the judgment of a panel of sailors. The races were on, and *Australia III* sailed through a loophole in the 12-meter rule and into history. Dennis Conner had won three races with a slower boat, but the Australians had won four with a faster one. With brittle courtesy on the steps of Marble House, the Cup was handed over to a triumphant Alan Bond. The applause was polite, but the champagne had lost its savor.

When the defeated *Liberty*'s mast was taken down the next morning, we discovered the obvious cause of the recent disaster. You could hear the shade of Commodore Stevens wail in anguish. The unthinkable had occurred. In defiance of immemorial custom, someone had neglected to place a coin for luck on the mast-step.



In the years that followed, while the East Coast shook with recrimination, Conner mustered a syndicate of unprecedented resources in San Diego. Marine architects of talent queued for computer time as both Conner and his rivals in San Francisco bid for the most powerful software money could buy. So not just one, but two radical designs of promise were shipped down under to compete against dozens of 12s from a half dozen nations in the elimination series that would lead to the first American challenge since 1851. New York's *America II* did not, alas, fare very well. And so, in the winter of 1986, bleary-eyed at three in the morning, I witnessed by satellite link to Boston the world turned rightside-up: Conner had waxed the Aussies in four straight races.

One of his stiffest competitors for the right to challenge had been, seemingly improbably, New Zealand. There, investment banker Michael Fay began to consider the fine print of a much amended document—the Deed of Gift dictating the terms incumbent upon the New York Yacht Club or whosoever should win the Cup from them. This masterpiece of Victorian pettifoggery contained, beneath the layers of modern amendments that allowed boats as small as 12 meters, a nineteenth-century codicil that demanded the acceptance of any challenge involving a boat no longer than 90 feet on the waterline, for a match with a "like boat." One standard inference was that New York must not unfairly exploit the fundamental physics of monohull performance—hull length at the water determines the limit of hull speed through it—by building a defender of grossly superior length.

So when a New Zealand-built vessel twice the size of a 12 materialized in federal admiralty jurisdiction in California, the legality of this bizarre challenge was up to the Superior Court of the State of New York, Justice Ciparek presiding to decide. Life is not fair. As enough lawyers to reassemble the Bell System sparred in Albany, the justice called time out. She instructed both parties to sail the damned things and come back later if they insisted on further litigation; Fay lost and so he did. And so in ultramontane Albany, whose only direct contact with the Atlantic Ocean is in the form of smoked salmon and shad roe, the court established a truly novel precedent. For the first time in history, somebody has been awarded a yachting trophy for losing races while sailing a slower boat. Three levels of judicial review and appeal remain before the Cup is exiled to Kiwiland, and the *Stars and Stripes* syndicate is not without counsel. So stay tuned.

The question *America* answered in 1851 was simple: Who on earth can build the fastest boat in the world? My own views on this dispute have been a matter of record since the *New York Times* published them a year ago. Stripped of all the deadwood, the deed should read like this:

Article 1.0. *Rules and Restrictions on Design, Materials, Construction and Instruments of Navigation*: There shall be none.

Article 1.1. *Further Rules*: There are no further rules except the sailing rules.

Article 1.2. *Further Articles*: Article 1.3 shall be the only further and the final article.

Article 1.3. *Resolution of Protests Concerning Articles 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3*: The devil take the hindmost.

• • •

It was August 15, 1988, T minus twenty-six days. A light and balmy onshore breeze ruffled the waters of San Diego harbor as the inflatable tender's bulbous nose bumped gently against the catamaran's leeward hull. She had fallen off to ease my boarding, a small mercy, as I traversed the jury-rigged dacron rope and fishnet trampoline to get to the windward hull. It was the boat's worst feature. I was lucky to get across standing up; ever try walking on jello during a major earthquake? Since this was the hard wingsails' shakedown run—it had been mated to the hulls just hours earlier—*Stars and Stripes* was being handled with care.

Looming above us like a full-scale mock-up of a B-1 wing was Hard Rig MK II, 104 feet of skeletal carbon fiber. This was not a sail but a rigid, symmetrical airfoil. It was disconcerting to watch Point Loma glide by through the transparent skins of gossamer mylar that clad its thick center section and movable slot. High atop it, raking sharply aftward were the shark-fins,

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paired vortex shedders, one for the main wing section, and one for the flap, working like the big feathers on a condor's wing tips. The bottom plate flared down to a titanium post-Chippendale ball and claw that nestled into a socket on the fore cross-beam like an artificial hip-joint. I make the obvious inquiry: Oh no! Not again! No coin, very bad Joss! Still, designer Bert Rutan had done well, enclosing ten times the volume of one of *Voyager*'s honest-to-gosh wings, the whole rig weighed barely half a ton.

As we cleared the point and the breeze picked up to eight or nine knots, the digital knotmeter started its ascent into the low teens. The numbers flashed by as we went onto a reach and the wingmast started to develop its first few thousand pounds of lift. Rutan and his crew of wing nuts had delivered more than the bare bolts. Since the boat and the seven of us together weighed three and a half tons soaking wet (which by now we were), the acceleration was impressive. It was not so in absolute terms, but the performance of a Hobie cat in a stiff breeze is not to be expected in a boat the size of the inside lines of a tennis court. I've sailed some pretty extreme multihulls, but I just couldn't get used to the missing three or more tons of structural weight. Throwing up a rooster tail with other big racing multihulls presumes a fair bit of wind, and our eerie ascent past 15 knots was taking place in the conspicuous absence of whitecaps. How could something this big fly a hull clear out of the water in seven knots of wind? Easily. And in a stiff breeze the wing's lift could approach the weight of the boat. And on one occasion it did—Conner, in exploring *Stars and Stripes*'s performance envelope, discovered a brave new world of nautical catastrophe—the dread reverse-camber liftout and capsize!

We hove to, the tender beside us, as a couple of dozen turns of the turnbuckles on the two main shrouds imparted a bit of stiffness to the rig. A cooler was passed aboard. It was past noon, and well past La Jolla too, when the tell-tale tan sheen of the big kevlar main appeared to our northwest. Not much was spoken as we hardened up and headed out for the first encounter of the final version of the defender with *New Zealand*. We started to do some semi-serious tacking on the way out, and I came to appreciate just how hard life was for the racing crew as they collectively bounded and bounced across the boat. Whenever three people put a foot down in unison, somebody was at risk of getting the Eskimo blanket toss. Never was the word trampoline better employed in nautical jargon.

Only the helmsman and tactician had room to stroll aft of the wing. Ashore, no one had mentioned the necessity of learning, in ten minutes or less, the gentle art of diving for dear life under the wheeling wing's low-slung undercarriage while trying to gauge trajectories and miss landing on hardware rather than netting when feet and trampoline parted company. With one hull flying, she boomed through the swells, trampoline awash, the aft cross-beam cleaving green water. Twice I landed hard, but the wear and tear was within normal limits. Hell, it was fun.

Within a half hour, I came to understand the meaning of two words with unprecedented clarity: big and slow. Sailing into *New Zealand*'s lee, you could feel your eyes adjusting to the gloom; her shadow weighed more than we did. She looked stiff as she was tall, twenty-two feet below her hull, twenty-four tons of lead hung on a knife-blade keel. We fell away after crossing tacks and, as the challenger went onto her fastest point of sail, a beam reach, fell in a couple of hundred yards beside her. We could recognize some faces from our earlier close encounter, and see her winch grinders and sail trimmers working hard to build speed.

They were not alone. Ever hear the expression "sandbagged"? In flagrant violation of one of yacht racing's oldest rules, another two dozen crew were far out on her broadly flared rail, two tons of movable human ballast. The walking sandbags of this latter-day racing scow could roll her onto a new tack like a dinghy by moving *en masse* across the 26-foot width of her overhang.

What can you do when ripping alongside something twice your size at thirteen knots? Easy: have a leisurely lunch, and, after raising the windward hull a dozen feet clear of the water for a better view of the opposition, harden up the rig to just this side of adamant, accellerate accordingly, and watch them shrink from sixteen stories high to a speck on the horizon. An hour later it was time to put on the brakes. We were coming up on the Mexican border.

What we saw receding was no dinosaur, but a tour de force of hydrodynamics and materials science, her towering mast bristling with strain gauges and hydraulic spreaders. Pumped up and quivering in the breeze, she was the very model of a modern *major* Marconi rig, taut as a crossbow, bending like a reed. There was nothing like her in the world. She was more than twice the size of any 12-meter, but only five tons heavier, carbon fiber on honeycomb from stem to stern: arguably the ultimate ultralight monohull. But just as *Stars and Stripes* would be the lawful prey of a windsurfer in a speed run in a gale, *New Zealand* belongs to the past. True, she can hold her own against a Class A tall ship, but today multihulls run the Atlantic in under a week. They have logged 518 nautical miles in a day's run. Not just hot rods like the one we were sailing, but sound cruising vessels capable of circumnavigation with kids on board (and, *de gustibus*, tough trimarans for rounding the Horn single-handed) have evolved in the last two decades.

We were sailing twice as fast as the wind, which, at the margin, is not a bad way to sail.

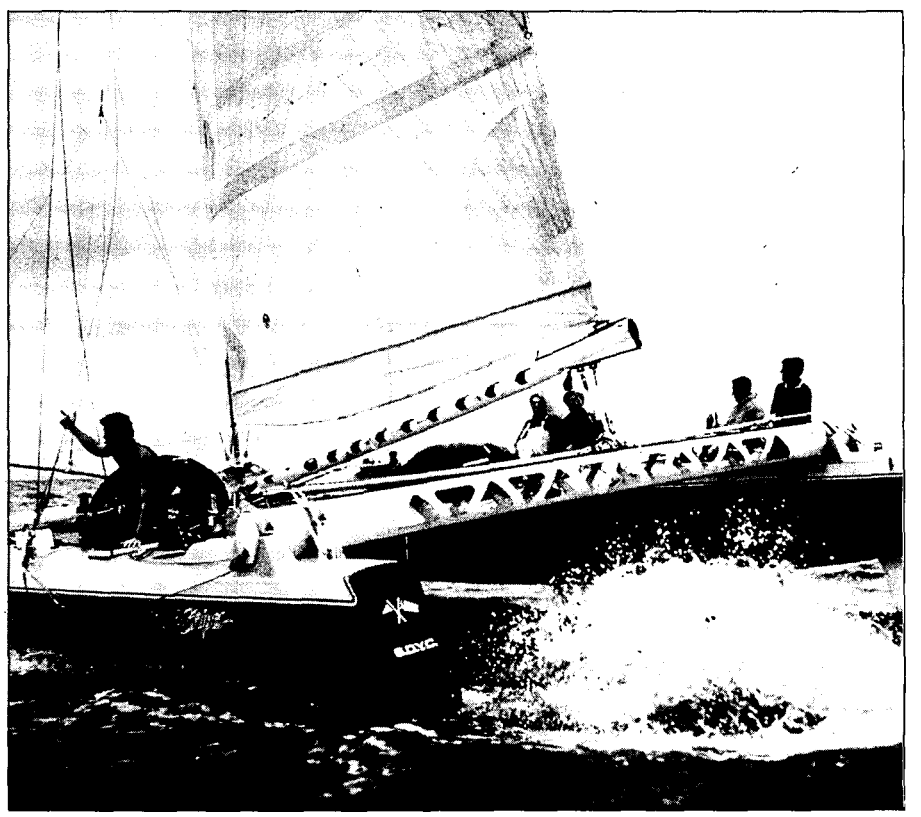
That multihulls have come of age is common knowledge abroad, for corporate-sponsored racing circuits like the Course d'Europe have captured the popular imagination like the unlimited air races of a generation ago. Back in the flat expanse of the harbor's waters, it was easy to see why. Sheltered from the swell, and with a full day's tuning, the knotmeter broke through 18 for the first time. We were sailing twice as fast as the wind, which, at the margin, is not a bad way to sail.

With the acceleration, both literal and metaphorical, that science infuses into the history of marine architecture, will come a shift in yachting's leisurely paradigm. *Stars and Stripes* is to cruising as downhill racing is to a cross-country treadmill. So as surely as adrenaline and grog are conducive to going in harm's way, those of you who sail will be seeing more of multihulls. And those of us who sail them will be seeing less of you, ever more briefly, and ever further and further astern.

This harsh Darwinian fact was forged into my psyche at a tender age—scene: the North Shore; Essex Bay; I'm hiked out on the trapeze of a Tornado—the Olympic rule catamaran—twenty feet of one hull, like a knife in the water, and the other three feet out, running free in the air. Wind: S by W, 14 kts; boat speed: somewhat higher. We flash by a goldplater, mahogany-bound and sitting pretty at anchor on the risen tide. A nice old fellow, taking cocktails on its ample fantail, bellows out the obvious: "Whatcha got in thea? A Fooahd motah?"

Upon which question, we with silent smiles reflect, "None required. Just airborne." And thence into the eel grass, not as a reaper, but skimming goosewise and raising a bounty of greenflies. What a way to travel. And so farewell, poor Michael Fay. The man seems doomed to wander the corridors of Albany to the end of time, messing about in courts.

Yet there is hope for a vessel like *New Zealand*. Just chop off that dumb lead keel, saw away the central nine-tenths of the deck overhang, and splice on to the stubs the twin hulls of a big world-class catamaran. (I hear *Royale*, a 75-footer, is up for grabs.) And voila!—the finest kind of trimaran. I look forward to her effervescent rechristening, an event worthy of the Southern Hemisphere's premier Diva. So may Michael Fay enjoy many a day's island-hopping aboard *Kiri Royale*. Cheers, mate! □



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David Brock

THE WORLD OF NARCOTERRORISM

The growing violence of the drug wars makes it clear that it's time for the Bush Administration to name names, identifying the insidious political forces underlying the narcotics business.

The public clamor for the government to do something about America's drug epidemic recently has reached an unprecedented pitch. The drug issue was prominent in the fall presidential campaign, though discussion rarely reached beyond George Bush's pledge to execute drug-related murderers and Michael Dukakis's charges that the Reagan Administration had coddled Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega. In the past couple of years, Congress has passed laws requiring, among other things, that the President certify annually that countries receiving U.S. aid are "cooperating fully" with efforts to crack down on drug smuggling and that he appoint a cabinet-level "drug czar" to coordinate U.S. policy. In a recent Gallup poll, respondents were asked which of five leading international issues was the most important facing the country; the largest number, 48 percent, named drug trafficking.

Despite all this attention, there is an equally widespread and converse view —that the war on drugs is unwinnable. This was seen most recently in the confirmation hearings for federal drug czar William Bennett. In statements from the Senate committee, and in the flurry of media profiles that followed, Bennett's task was described, in pitying tones, as an impossible one. (A notable exception was a piece in the April issue of *TAS* by Fred Barnes.)

For his part, Bennett recently has unveiled an $80 million effort to attack the epidemic on the streets of Washington, D.C. The plan stresses beefed up law enforcement, additional prisons, and enhanced federal-local efforts in intelligence-gathering and forensics. The Washington program is envisaged as a model for attacking the demand side of the problem. There is so far no hint, however, as to how the Bush Administration will deal with the trickier issue of choking off the flow of drugs into the country. Bennett has been receptive in the past to the idea (suggested by Barnes and others) of involving the U.S. military in bilateral assaults on the Latin drug cartels, but since taking office he's understandably backpedaled until all the foreign policy appointments are in place.

The supply side of the equation seems at first glance overwhelming in its breadth: there is evidence to implicate a host of government officials, from the Bahamas to Paraguay, in the narcotics trade. How often have we heard, when the question of drug supplies and suppliers is broached, that no matter how much is spent on interdiction efforts, coping with our 12,000-mile international border is an impossible task? The international drug syndicate is portrayed as hydra-headed: when one drug baron is taken out of commission, another quickly moves in; for every coca field sprayed and destroyed, another is cultivated; when a trafficking route is shut down, traffickers simply switch routes.

What to do? This half of the drug policy puzzle will be solved only when an entrenched misconception about the relationship between U.S. antidrug efforts and U.S. foreign policy is reversed. Academic experts, policy-makers, and the press all tend to view this relationship as at best irrelevant and at worst contradictory. The best example of such muddled thinking issued recently in a statement from the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Narcotics, Terrorism and International Operations, John Kerry, in which he called on the Bush Administration to focus its Latin American national security initiatives on the drug issue:

> In the post-World War II era, the national security focus of the United States was framed by our predominant concern with . . . Marxist expansion. Now we must take equally drastic steps to combat the new threat to our national security, the tide of drugs which are flooding our hemisphere. All of us are concerned about the spread of Communism in Latin America and elsewhere, but we cannot afford to put on blinders to other threats which are equally grave. Drugs in this hemisphere are an equal threat and they are a more immediate and effective threat.

Kerry is not alone in his thinking; in fact, his sentiments pretty much sum up the conventional wisdom. During the fall campaign, the *New York Times* put it this way: "Like its predecessors, the Reagan administration has repeatedly subordinated the drug issue to other American interests, from support for insurgents fighting leftist regimes to the belief that punishing drug-producing countries might destabilize them. . . . In Central America, the administration's preoccupation with the contra war against the Nicaraguan government has contributed to a lack of urgency in the war on drugs." (This was also a refrain of the Dukakis presidential campaign.)

While it is in fact true that the Reagan Administration's efforts to stanch the supply of drugs flowing into the country were inadequate, this was not an inevitable effect of its anti-Communist initiatives in Latin America; the two can and should proceed in tandem. Who are John Kerry and his fellow obfuscators kidding? The U.S. government has known for quite some time that those involved in either the production or the transport of drugs—from the bloodthirsty Maoist guerrilla insurgents in Peru, to the gang of pineapple-faced military dictators in Panama, to America's regional Communist nemesis, Fidel Castro—are enemies of democracy and of American influence in the region. The profits from this huge enterprise—of which the $30 billion annual American drug market is no small part—and

David Brock is a senior editor of Insight *magazine.*

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bankroll the agendas of Marxist-Leninist governments, in Cuba and Nicaragua, and movements, in Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, and elsewhere, bent on destroying legal and social institutions, fomenting chaos, terrorizing innocent people, and eventually exporting revolution. In places like Panama and Mexico, authoritarian military elites are involved deeply in the drug trade and have made unholy alliances with the revolutionary left to get or maintain power. It is time for the Bush Administration to name names, identifying the insidious political forces underlying the narcotics business. Let's start working with our friends against those throughout the hemisphere whose activities—exporting drugs and importing arms—are strengthening the thugs of the left and the right at the expense of the democratic center.

"The Latin criminal cartel which has profited from the depravity of some Americans constitutes an international underworld so extensive, so wealthy and so powerful that it can literally buy governments and destabilize entire societies," retired U.S. Army Gen. Paul Gorman, former commander of the U.S. Southern Command, told a Senate subcommittee last February. "If you want to move arms and munitions in Latin America, the established networks are owned by the cartel. It has lent itself to the purposes of terrorists, of saboteurs, of spies, of insurgents, and of subversives."

This is not simply the fulmination of a conservative U.S. Army general. Throughout the region, there is a new sense among the democratic leaders that their political survival is threatened by the narcoterrorism phenomenon. At a recent conference at the Carter Center at Emory University, Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez said drug trafficking is now the biggest threat to sovereign governments in Latin America. Increasingly, the heretofore reluctant leaders are acknowledging that outside help will be essential in the war, even at the risk of provoking an outcry from the many leftist apologists for the drug traders and terrorists. Jamaica's new prime minister, Michael Manley, who in his previous term in office was the epitome of an anti-American demagogue, told the conference: "People used to say drugs are a U.S. concern, not to worry. Now we see we need controls even more than you. We are more vulnerable to these vicious people and we need help. This is the greatest international criminal conspiracy we have ever known. . . . It affects individuals, society, above all democracy."

Colombian officials have all but conceded that they have lost their country to the drug lords. In April, Colombian President Virgilio Barco delivered a speech in Washington in which he called for greater coordination of intelligence and greater police cooperation between the United States and the drug-producing countries it often criticizes. Even in nondemocratic countries such as Haiti, moderate, pro-American leaders like Gen. Prosper Avril, who try to make progress in curbing official involvement in drug trans-shipments, must face grave political consequences: his efforts in this direction are thought to have provoked Haitian military officers to seek his ouster in a coup recently.

There were in fact some efforts early in the Reagan Administration to focus the attention of policy-makers on narcoterrorism, for example, the growing links between Marxist-Leninist terrorist groups like the Castro-backed M-19 in Colombia and the drug trade; Secretary of State George Shultz, for his part, made some memorable speeches on the topic, and State's Latin Bureau issued an important document on Sandinista involvement in drug trafficking. But the various bureaucracies involved in the issue—the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Customs Service, the FBI, as well as the foreign policy apparatus —were not organized for what was needed: an ideological war on the Latin drug trade.

"Narco-guerrilla" is a word that falls easily and often from the tongues of those in the know throughout Latin America, but the concept has been pooh-poohed as a right-wing fantasy by the more sophisticated Latin affairs analysts north of the border. In April, in a report titled "The Killings in Colombia," Americas Watch asserted that the Reagan Administration had "misleadingly portrayed" an alliance between drug traffickers and left-wing guerrillas and "completely ignored" what it called Colombia's "narco-repression," a supposed alliance between drug dealers and military officers. (The report fails, of course, to note that these military officers are chafing under democratic rule and are no friends of the United States.)

Nonetheless, the evidence—much of it on the public record—of a largely unrecognized Marxist nexus with the drug lords of Latin America is piling up. In the past year, just as the Democratic left has been pushing the U.S. to get cozy with him, it has become clear that much of the activity is directed by Fidel Castro as a new weapon in his long war on America. In this, Castro wins both ways. The drugs flow into the U.S., tearing apart the country's social fabric and killing off our youth; the cash from the venture is put into arms and explosives that flow to Castro surrogates throughout the continent and also helps keep the head of his own sinking revolution above water.

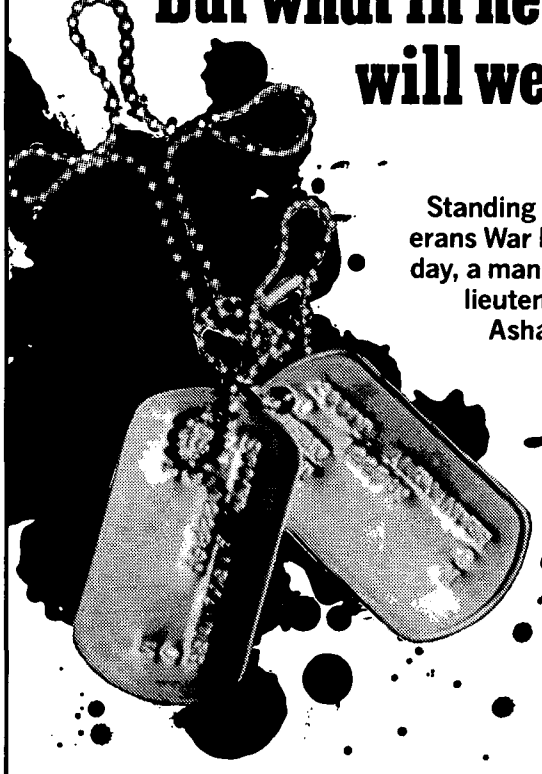
Last July, Hugo Ceballos and four others were convicted in Miami of smuggling more than $10 million worth of cocaine through Cuba in 1987. According to a federal indictment of March 1988, the five had smuggled two drug shipments totaling 700 kilos of cocaine from Colombia to Cuba's Varadero military base, seventy miles east of Havana on Cuba's northern coastline. One shipment was escorted over Cuban airspace by a Soviet MiG, flown by a Cuban air force pilot (U.S. military planes are forbidden to pursue such flights); another was escorted from Cuban territorial waters by the Cuban coast guard. The base is only 100 miles south of the Florida Keys, a major entry point for drug shipments to the U.S.

Ruben Ruiz, one of Ceballos's co-conspirators, told a government informant in a secretly recorded videotape (released by the Miami district attorney this March) that he arranged for Cuban officials "at the toppest channels in Havana" to provide a cover story for a May 1987 drug flight's landing. Cuban officials informed Federal Aviation Administration officials in Miami, where the plane was scheduled to land, that it had run into "fuel trouble" on the flight from Colombia and needed to make an emergency landing at Varadero. Ruiz said that the Cubans who then supervised the unloading of cocaine from the plane were "government. Those were big guys." At another point, speaking of the cash payoff to the Cubans, Ruiz said, "The money went in Fidel's drawer."

Though the details referred to two specific operations, Ruiz and his father, Reinaldo, told the undercover agent that the Cuban connection was a routine link that began on secret airstrips in Colombia, continued into Cuba for unloading and repackaging,

Before Vietnam, war was hell.

But what in heaven's name will we call it now?



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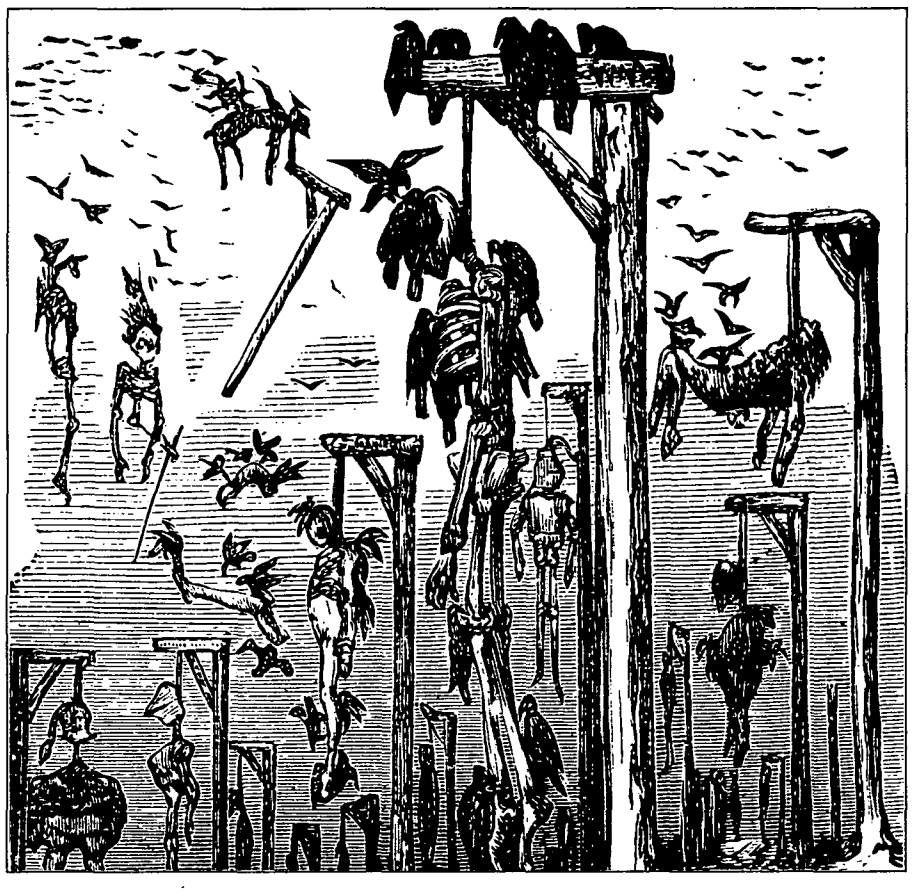
and then came to America's shores by boat. The boats were escorted out of Cuban waters, close to U.S. limits, by government torpedo boats equipped with advanced radars that were able to alert the smugglers as to the whereabouts of U.S. drug-interceptor vessels. The undercover agent was also told by the pair that those involved in the smuggling ring included an agent of the DGI, the Cuban secret police, as well as several top Cuban military officers. (Father and son both pleaded guilty to a 27-count smuggling indictment in March.)

According to the federal prosecutor in Miami, U.S. Attorney Dexter Lehtinen: "The evidence in the [Ceballos] trial demonstrated that Cuban territory was used with the knowledge, approval, and cooperation of the Cuban government. These were not simply a few rogue, low-level Cuban officials. This demonstrated knowledge at high levels of the Cuban defense establishment." Other law enforcement officials said the series of indictments in the last year involving Ceballos, the Ruizes, and others showed that cocaine traffickers were turning to Cuba as a transit base, as U.S. law enforcement officials crack down on smuggling through the Bahamas and other Caribbean islands. No Cuban officials have been indicted yet, but the case is on-going. (Law enforcement officials working on the case told me that the State Department does not look favorably on the filing of charges against Cuban officials, but State denies it has gotten involved.)

The Ceballos indictment came on the heels of the February 1988 indictment of Panama's Noriega, which accused the general of cooperating with drug traffickers to guarantee a virtual free-trade zone for drug shipments, as well as giving them the run of Panama's airports and banking system. Though the media used the Noriega affair to discredit the Reagan Administration and the CIA, the real story here was the threat to democracy in the region posed by the still-undisturbed alliance of Noriega, Castro, the Sandinista regime, and narcotics traffickers. This alliance was solidified in late 1984, when Colombia's Medellin drug cartel, which operates out of the city of Medellin 150 miles northwest of Bogota, began major foreign operations; it was forced to look for staging bases and places to launder money abroad after the murder of Colombian Justice Minister Rodrigo Lara Bonilla in April 1984 provoked a government crackdown on Medellin's operations. The organization is thought to take in more than $2 billion in drug sales annually and is responsible for 80 percent of all cocaine crossing U.S. borders. In congressional testimony and in the Noriega indictment, José Blandon, a former top adviser to Noriega, identified 1984 as a "key year for the development and growth of this international network. Cartel leaders took refuge in Panama and Nicaragua."



Outlining the Castro-cartel relationship, Blandon said Castro's strategy is: "If you want to have influence on Colombia's political world, you have to have influence on the drug trafficking world, too. Fidel's view of the situation was that the war in Central America waged by the U.S. made it easier or at least gave him a moral justification to do anything that was necessary." He described how, at Castro's direction, the M-19 guerrillas in Colombia oversee and protect drug shipments from Colombia to Panama to Cuba and then into the United States. Both Castro and Noriega made millions in hard currency from Colombian drug sources for allowing the use of their countries as shipment destinations. To facilitate this trade, Blandon said, Castro assigned an ambassador to Colombia who also served as a contact between the M-19 guerrillas and the drug traffickers.

The U.S. government has known for quite some time that those involved in either the production or the transport of drugs are enemies of democracy and of American influence in the region.

Blandon also told the story of how Noriega had accepted $5 million in 1984 from the Medellin drug cartel in exchange for letting it establish a cocaine processing plant in southern Panama. Learning of a cartel plot to assassinate him after he reneged on the deal and had the plant raided, Noriega turned to Castro for help. Blandon, who was present at the meeting, said that Castro brokered a deal that involved return of the protection money paid by the cartel and release of twenty-three drug traders to Colombia without prosecution. This had the effect of keeping the Colombia-Panama drug network in place, which was in Castro's interest, in more ways than one. Noriega allowed Cuban officials to set up a network of front companies in Panama that enabled them to circumvent a U.S. trade embargo, allowing them to buy U.S. weapons, among other things. He also regularly turned over U.S. intelligence information to Castro, allowed the KGB to set up operations in Panama City, and provided arms to the Sandinistas since at least 1982. "Fidel feared that Noriega would be replaced in Panama. . . . His interests were political, they were economic and they were interests linked to the war which was being waged with the U.S.," Blandon said.

An indictment issued this March in Jacksonville, Florida, adds considerable weight to Blandon's contentions. The case was investigated by U.S. law enforcement personnel as a follow-up to the trial of Carlos Lehder Rivas, a leader of the Medellin cartel. In an interview two years before he was tried on drug trafficking charges in 1987, Lehder explained that "cocaine is the Latin American time bomb" because it is a "double struggle. It is a struggle against imperialism that has come to poison us, to corrupt us, and it is a struggle for the dollars needed by the people of Latin America in order to liberate themselves and shake off the imperialist yoke forever."

In the new indictment, the United States charges that after Pablo Escobar Gaviria, another Medellin cartel leader, assassinated Lara Bonilla, the top Medellin cartel leaders fled Colombia. Lehder flew directly to Nicaragua. Escobar, José Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha, Jorge Ochoa Vasquez, and his brother Fabio Ochoa Vasquez first fled to Panama, but joined Lehder in Nicaragua within a few weeks. While there, the indictment alleges, they brought approximately 1,400 kilograms of cocaine into Nicaragua, which was stored at Los Brasiles air force base just northwest of Managua.

According to the indictment, one cocaine shipment was successfully brought into the United States; it was flown by Lehder's pilots from Nicaragua, over Cuba, to Andros Island, Bahamas, and then brought by boat to Florida. A second cocaine flight into the United States, piloted by an American, Barry Seal, a DEA informant, led to the seizure of 665 kilograms of cocaine by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

The indictment further charges that Seal was murdered at the direction of Fabio Ochoa and Escobar in retaliation for tipping off U.S. law enforcement authorities. When flying from Colombia to Nicaragua, Seal had damaged his aircraft in a landing at Los Brasiles; he told DEA authorities before he was murdered that Frederico Vaughan, a personal assistant to Sandinista Interior Minister Tomas Borge, arranged for him to continue the trip to the United States in another plane. Equipped with a hidden camera, Seal returned to the airport to retrieve the drugs. Both Vaughan and Escobar, escorted by Nicaraguans in uniform and recorded on videotape, personally helped Seal load the cocaine into the aircraft. (These photos were declassified and released by then-Florida Sen. Paula Hawkins in April 1984.)

In 1988 there was also an important disclosure about drug trafficking from a high-ranking Cuban defector, Maj. Florentino Aspillaga Lombard. In an

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interview published March 23 in the *Washington Times*, he asserted that drug traffickers are frequent guests of the Cuban government at Havana's Triton Hotel. In addition, he revealed that a tourist resort in Cuba built for use by members of Colombian narcotics cartels has been in operation since 1981. "Cayo Largo . . . was organized as a front for tourists. You can go directly there and don't need a passport into Cuba so you can do all kinds of movements there. You can traffic in drugs and anything else."

Aspillaga said he had been told by the chief of the Cuban DGI that drug syndicates used a fleet of thirteen ships and twenty-one aircraft that operated on Cuban territory and in Cuban waters with the protection of Cuban Special Troops—commando-type units under the direction of Castro confidant José Abrahantes, the Cuban interior minister. This high-level involvement indicates that the drug-related activities could not have been carried out without the approval of Castro. "He's Fidel's right-hand man for all clandestine activities," Aspillaga said. He also said that Colombian drug traffickers met regularly in Cuba with Cuban Defense Minister Raul Castro. His brother Fidel views drugs as "a very important weapon against the United States because drugs demoralize people and undermine society," Aspillaga said.

The other major criminal case involving Cuba reaches back to 1982, when U.S. officials undertook an investigation of the career of Colombian Jaime Guillot Lara, who later was accused of narcotics smuggling in Miami by a federal grand jury. The indictment charged that Guillot had been responsible for sending 2.5 million pounds of marijuana, 25 million methaqualone tablets, and eighty pounds of cocaine to the U.S. between 1977 and 1981. According to the congressional testimony of Francis Mullen, then the head of the DEA, Guillot first met with Cuban officials assigned to the Cuban embassy in Bogota in 1979 and in 1980 "began to receive official Cuban protection for the movement of his drug-laden vessels to the U.S."

Four Cuban officials were indicted with Guillot: Fernando Ravelo Renedo, formerly Cuba's ambassador in Bogota; Gonzalo Bassols Suarez, formerly the minister-counselor in the Bogota embassy; Rene Rodriguez Cruz, a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist party; and Vice Admiral Aldo Santa Maria Cuadrado, the chief of the Cuban navy, who is also a member of the CCP. The DEA learned that Cuba's facilitation of Guillot's smuggling ventures provided hard currency—conservatively estimated at $10 million a month—"which Cuba used to support revolutionary activity in Latin America," Mullen said. "Cuba was also able to utilize the smuggling expertise and capabilities of Guillot by having him transport and deliver arms which were ultimately destined for the M-19, led by Guillot's close friend, Jaime Baternan."

The indictment described how cocaine, marijuana, and quaaludes were moved by drug traffickers from Colombia to Cuba, and then transferred in Cuban waters from large "mother ships" to small speedboats, which took the drugs to southeastern Florida in a matter of hours. In exchange, Castro demanded massive payoffs, up to a whopping $500,000 per shipment. At the trial, evidence was presented documenting meetings between Fidel and Raul Castro, the Cuban intelligence services, Cuba's Americas Department, and Colombian M-19 guerrillas and Medellin drug smugglers. The four high-ranking officials, as well as Guillot, were never extradited to stand trial but were convicted in absentia. (Once he traveled to a third country, Mexico, Guillot was arrested and inexplicably released. He then fled to Nicaragua and was later reported killed in an airplane crash.)

The evidence—much of it on the public record—of a largely unrecognized Marxist nexus with the drug lords of Latin America is piling up.

Cuban officials also seem to have played a critical role in getting the Sandinista regime involved in the drug trade. According to Antonio Farach, the former minister-counselor at the Nicaraguan embassies in Honduras and Venezuela, Raul Castro made a visit to Managua in 1981 during which he introduced the Sandinistas to members of Bolivian and Colombian drug cartels and arranged for Nicaraguan entry into the syndicate.

In Senate testimony in 1984, Farach said that in subsequent years Sandinista officials regularly allowed drug traffickers from South America to land, refuel, and take off from the international airport in Managua. They also provided false passports and visas to the drug-runners. In return, the Sandinista regime was given a percentage of the worth of the shipments. Farach said that officials of the government as high as Defense Minister Humberto Ortega were directly involved in the operations. The Sandinistas knew, Farach said, that the drugs were destined for American young people and so were a "political weapon" against America. Moreover, the revenues gained provided "good economic benefit" to support the aims of the Revolution.

According to a U.S. State Department report, "Inside the Sandinista Regime," Sandinista involvement in the drug trade evolved in two steps. In 1982, Tomas Borge's Interior Ministry began selling on the international market cocaine recovered by the Nicaraguan police. Later, Borge made contact with Colombian cocaine dealers through Paul Atha, manager of an Interior Ministry front operation called Holding Investment Corporation, which handles business activities in Managua and abroad to obtain U.S. dollars. Atha arranged that the Nicaraguan government would provide aircraft for the cocaine traffickers and allow them to use Nicaraguan airports for refueling stops.

In congressional testimony in 1986, Alvaro Baldizon, a former top deputy to Borge who is described as the highest-ranking, most credible defector from Nicaragua, said Sandinista government leaders frequently provide support for Colombian drug traffickers bound for the United States. Drug planes from Colombia routinely land at Nicaraguan military installations, refuel, take on provisions, and continue their journey. "I was informed that the activity involved giving protection, lodging, refueling and access to the landing strip for Colombian traffickers traveling to the U.S.," Baldizon testified.

In return, the Nicaraguan government is given "a percentage of the proceeds" from the eventual sale of the drugs, Baldizon said. "Mr. Borge had collections of Rolex watches, 1,000 videocassettes, 20 Mercedes and two jaguars in the yard of his house, and harems of women. Some of the money was used to provide trips for their relatives to Europe, the United States and Cuba" and to finance the war against the contras. He said Nicaraguan leaders told him that cocaine trafficking to the U.S. "destroys and corrupts U.S. youth so as to harm and weaken future generations."

This sort of cooperation—between Marxist-Leninist regimes and movements and greedy drug merchants—is often strained, like a bad marriage. In fact, the Medellin cartel's original intent was to put the M-19 movement, which is closer to Castro than any other insurgent group in the hemisphere, out of business after the terrorist group had kidnapped for ransom one of the daughters of the Ochoa family. By 1985, however, the cartel was paying the M-19 to do its dirty work. The most famous example came that year when the M-19 killed twelve Colombian supreme court justices and dozens of others for a $5 million payoff from the cartel. Since then, the M-19 has carried out assassinations and provided the cartel armed protection for its drug

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processing labs and clandestine airstrips.

The Colombian government has recently reported that the M-19 and another insurgent group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (known as the FARC), under the sponsorship of the Soviet Union, have been building their own airstrips to transport drugs out of the country. Besides making money and helping undermine the government, the drug traffickers themselves lately have been pointing to an ideological convergence of interest with Marxist-Leninist insurgents. In a recent interview in the *Washington Post*, Mario Arango, a Medellin city council member and unofficial cartel spokesman, said the narcotics business has ushered in an egalitarian "social revolution." The article noted that Arango's home "is decorated with an embroidered portrait of Joseph Stalin."

The M-19 has been forging links with other guerrilla movements that are deeply involved in the drug trade, most notably Peru's Maoist Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and MRTA—the Castro-backed Marxist Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement—both of which moved into the country's highly fertile, tropical areas two years ago, where the cocaine trade is based. According to a recent article in the pro-MRTA publication *Cambio*, the guerrilla groups have become self-financing through heavy involvement in a lucrative protection racket, extracting money from drug dealers and killing those who refuse to pay. In valleys largely under guerrilla control, Peruvian peasants farm about 450,000 acres of coca, enough to supply half the cocaine consumed in the U.S. each year; often, the guerrillas intervene to make sure the peasants are paid good prices for coca leaf and paste sold to intermediaries. The guerrillas are also moving beyond guard duty at plantations and warehouses to transporting partially processed cocaine, following M-19's lead.

Sendero Luminoso also has dedicated itself to thwarting Peruvian-U.S. antidrug efforts. In recent months, the U.S. has sent more antidrug agents and helicopters to help in a government campaign against the cocaine trade; as a protest against the eradication drive, Sendero has launched bombing attacks in Lima and other densely populated areas. In return, the big narcotraffickers supply the guerrillas with sophisticated weaponry. In late March, Peru's government announced that it would bar the wide spraying of a controversial herbicide, known as Spike, in the coca fields of the mostly guerrilla-controlled Upper Huallaga Valley. U.S. and Peruvian antinarcotics experts, however, got the government to agree to allow a test spraying of Spike in a small, isolated coca field in the central jungle area. Even this modest effort immediately brought charges from those who provide the narcotraffickers' political cover—the influential United Left opposition party—that the government had bowed to U.S. pressure. In mid-February, U.S. DEA agents who normally advise Peru's Civil Guard on eradicating coca fields and cocaine processing laboratories were called off duty for a few weeks so they could reinforce their base camp against anticipated attacks by Sendero.

None of this has kept Havana and Managua from embarking on a major propaganda offensive to turn the drug issue in their favor. In December, Fidel Castro told a visiting congressional delegation that he wanted to begin joint efforts with the U.S. to halt the flow of drugs. Rep. Charles Rangel, chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, said Castro "made a commitment . . . to share intelligence with us on drug traffickers or suspected drug traffickers who fly over Cuban airspace or find their way navigating through Cuban waters." At the same time, a DEA official noted there was "potential" for greater cooperation with Cuba "because it's so strategically located." The official, quoted anonymously in the *New York Times*, said there was "pretty strong evidence" that drug traffickers are operating through Cuba with "some official complicity." In March, Nicaragua offered to work with the U.S. in a regional antidrug effort in Central America; the plan would establish a centralized drug enforcement authority in each Central American country. Some in Congress are hailing prematurely this "new spirit of cooperation." Rangel said: "It is time to depoliticize narcotics efforts with Cuba." The evidence, however, would suggest the opposite, that the drug war has a rather large political dimension.

It seems unlikely that Castro is prepared to abandon this important vehicle. Discussing the Cuban strategic agenda in a recent monograph for the Cuban American National Foundation, Rachel Ehrenfeld writes:

> Based on all the evidence, it appears that Castro accepted the Soviets' recommendation to exploit any perceived weaknesses in the United States, and that the flow of narcotics has become a salient of Cuba's strategy. Not only has that salient been steadily expanded, but Castro has been able to capitalize on the growing, associated "support network"—and particularly the tentacles of narcoterrorism—to strengthen Cuba's influence in strategic parts of the hemisphere more generally. While in earlier years narcoterrorism was used opportunistically as a source of profits and as a convenient means of creating self-sustaining insurgencies, today it is a major channel through which the Cuban-Soviet strategy is implemented to exert political influence on a state level in Latin America.

In Senate testimony last year, Ramon Milian-Rodriguez, a former money launderer for the Medellin cartel, went public with a story about Communist infiltration of the cartel. The Cuban-American accountant, who is now serving a 43-year jail term, suggested that Cuba's involvement with drugs may be part of a grand plan eventually aimed at killing the cartel leaders and taking control of an organization that reaches into many of the region's governments and financial institutions, and has a hold over millions of drug addicts in the U.S.

Senator Kerry's report follows the all-too-familiar pattern of beating up on the alleged transgressions of our friends while refusing even to examine those of our enemies.

Certainly, the U.S. should act to counter the narcoterrorists' assault. This will prove quite difficult, however, if the Democratic left continues adhering to its dovish policies on Cuba and Nicaragua while at the same time distorting the issue in places like Panama for partisan advantage. In April, for example, Senator Kerry's subcommittee, after two years of hearings, issued an exhaustive report on the hemisphere's drug trade and U.S. policy. The report blasts U.S. dealings with Noriega, even though it was the Reagan Administration that, once it had the evidence, indicted him and attempted to remove him from power. (The Bush Administration should continue this effort, though it seems to have dropped the ball. One former State Department official told me that Secretary of State Jim Baker, who ran the Bush campaign, fought hard against the State Department's anti-Noriega effort, on the grounds that just raising the issue helped Dukakis. Baker also has implicitly accepted the Kerry smear that the Reagan Administration's foreign policies thwarted the drug war.)

The Kerry report's real target, however, is the Nicaraguan contra resistance. Kerry expended vast amounts of time and resources to come up with evidence that contra leaders were trafficking in drugs, but all that he could do is resurrect old stories involving the long-defunct contra southern front of Eden Pastora. [1] The report does not deal with evidence of drug smuggling by the Sandinista regime. Kerry apparently was not interested in following up any leads in this area, even though the subcommittee's chief investigator, Jack Blum, told a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1986: "We have heard that there are narcotics operations in Nicaragua, and there is no question about it. . . . I should say further, senator, that some of these same people have turned up going in and out of Cuba with impunity."

Kerry's report follows the all-too-familiar pattern of beating up on the alleged transgressions of our friends while refusing even to examine those of our enemies. In fact, the entire congressional approach to the issue only makes matters worse. There is, for example, the 1986 antidrug law, mentioned above, that requires President Bush to certify that twenty-five countries which receive U.S. foreign aid and are identified by the State Department as major drug-producing and drug-transporting countries are "cooperating fully" with efforts to crack down on the trade. Those that do not qualify lose half of their economic and military aid and could suffer other penalties. Often, such strange bedfellows as Kerry and Sen. Jesse Helms team up to decertify allies like Mexico, which polarizes Mexican politics and guarantees that the positive efforts undertaken by the government will fail. By punishing only foreign aid recipients, countries not allied with the U.S. escape sanction. This furthers the agenda of the left, both here and south of the border, in much the same way that proposals to "bomb Medellin" without cooperation from Colombia do. (The people who suggest this would never contemplate bombing Havana.)

At bottom, people like Kerry want to discredit interventionist U.S. foreign policy by portraying it as a roadblock to solving the drug problem. The fact is, however, that only through strong intervention on the side of democracy can the U.S. nurture the kinds of governments willing to help stem the drug flow. When we do not accomplish this —as we have not in either Panama or Nicaragua—the problem is not going to go away. The only beneficiaries will be those revolutionary forces eyeing Peru, Colombia, El Salvador, and eventually even Mexico. □

[1] See my article "Christic Mystics and Their Drug-Running Theories," *TAS*, May 1988.

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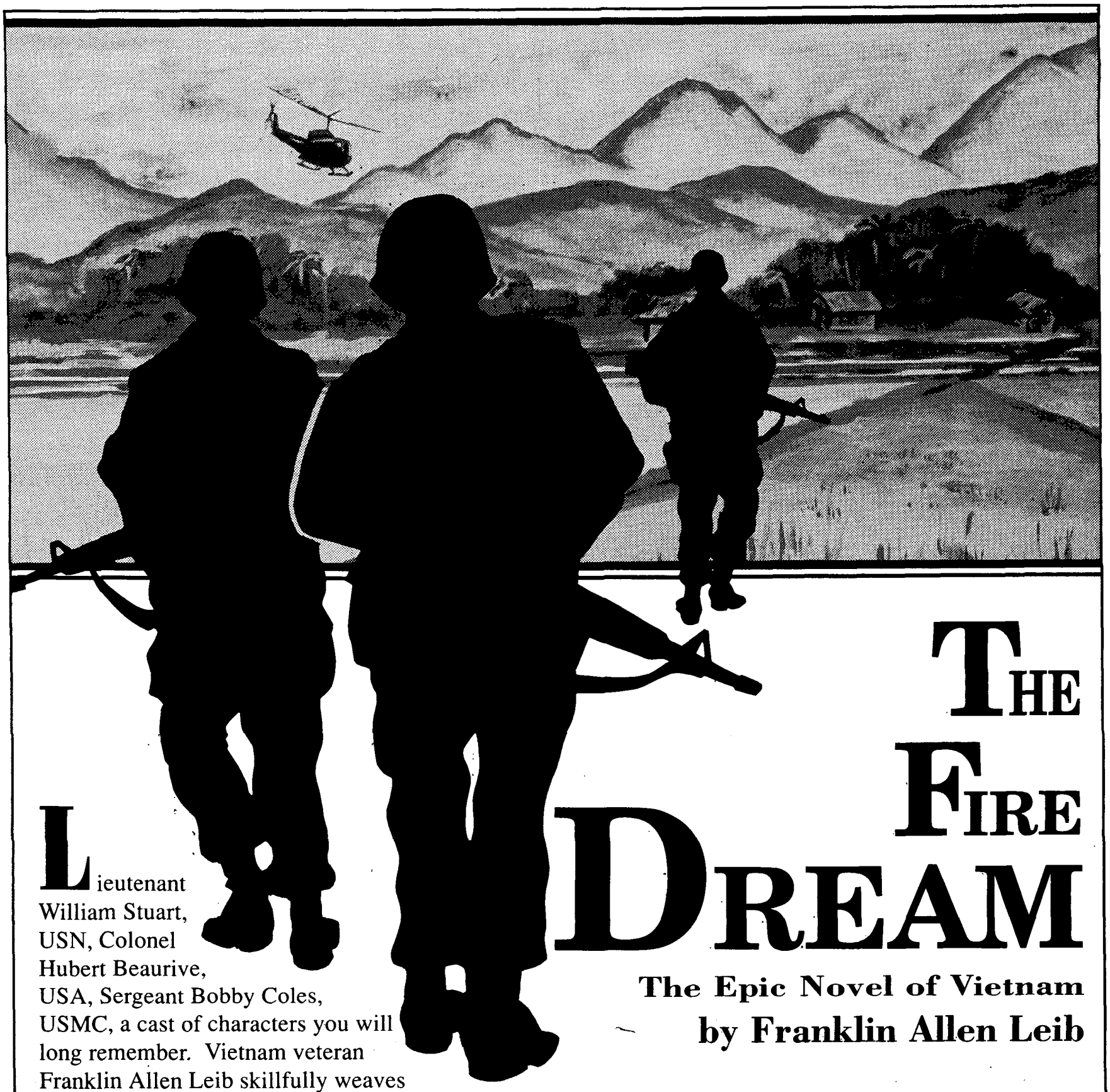

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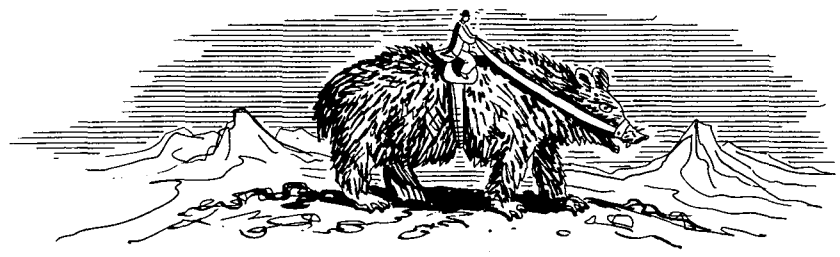

FIGHTING FOR JALALABAD

by Marin Strmecki

Jalalabad, Afghanistan

A pall of dust and smoke kicked up by the day's artillery and rocket rounds—both incoming and outgoing—hung over the former garrison of the Afghan Army's 11th Division on the eastern end of Jalalabad. Our Toyota 4x4 pickups, each with a dozen Afghan mujahedeen piled into the back, entered the compound, which had been overrun the day before. We filed past a line of armored personnel carriers and heavy trucks that had been attacked and disabled when government forces tried to make a run for the safety of the nearby airport. After pausing for photographs at the hulk of a still-smoldering T-54 tank and some heavy artillery cannons and passing by the obstacle course, we turned the corner into the barracks area and the vehicle storage and maintenance yards. Poster-size pictures of Afghan Communist party politburo members glowered at us as we passed 200 vehicles—APCs, tanks, self-propelled artillery, and tanker trucks—abandoned in their parking places. Call it the wreckage of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

With seven days elapsed in the battle for Jalalabad, I was accompanying General Abdul Rahim Wardak, military leader of the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA), one of the seven Peshawar-based resistance organizations, as he arrived to take personal charge of the eastern front. After touring the captured garrison, Wardak set up a command post at the 11th Division's former headquarters, which Soviet advisers had handed over to the Afghan army shortly before their final withdrawal in mid-February. A month later, resistance forces had not only taken the base but also reached the front edge of the city's airport barely two kilometers away.

A sense of great expectation pervaded the resistance ranks, leavened by a measure of anxiety about their inexperience in conventional warfare. While the airport's heavy fortifications—dense perimeter minefields, dug-in tanks, and underground bunkers—had stalled further progress, the mujahedeen were pleased that after fighting the Red Army for nine years they would finally have a chance to go one-on-one against the Kabul regime. They believed that conquering Jalalabad, the country's second largest city, would inflict a potentially mortal blow to the confidence of the Kabul regime, as well as eliminate the principal obstacle to the shipment of arms and ammunition by truck along the main road from the Khyber Pass to Kabul. For them, the battle for Jalalabad was the first round in the battle for Kabul.

As evening set in, Communist artillery batteries continued the afternoon's shelling, which, with characteristic inaccuracy, had been wildly overshooting the resistance positions. The more errant shots exploded in the distance with hollow, barely audible thuds. Several dozen of the better efforts at least briefly interrupted conversation; only one barrage sent us scrambling for cover. Meanwhile, the nearby mujahedeen positions responded with continual bursts of fire from heavy machine guns and AK-47s, punctuated every few seconds by launches of mortar and rocket rounds.

General Wardak, who stood over six feet tall and sported a jungle camouflage field jacket and a matching beret stylishly set to the right, had been at the top of his class in U.S. military training courses he attended as an Afghan army officer from 1969 through 1972. He had been the first to train his fighters to wage quasi-conventional battles against Soviet forces.[1] As he organized his command post, a one-story cement structure with a corrugated tin roof, he clearly relished the new form of combat. On the ten-by-ten-foot patio at the south end of the building, Wardak sat in a metal chair facing three desks: two were for his radio men, who worked to make contact with frontline units and with Peshawar, and one was for other aides who took down his orders on notepads with the NIFA letterhead and handed them over to couriers. As he paused to survey his improvised office, which was surrounded by a bed of marigolds and a vegetable garden and separated from hay fields by a stand of poplar trees, Wardak remarked, "This is a beautiful spot, isn't it?"

Before the withdrawal, Moscow's forces had prepared Jalalabad well for the expected mujahedeen onslaught. The city, situated in a plain bisected by the Kabul River, had three rings of security posts. The outer posts—Samarkhiel, Bisoot, and Tourghar—were well-fortified mountain-top garrisons that controlled the entire plain with their artillery. The second ring stood several kilometers from the urban districts and the third at the perimeter of the central city.

At the outset of the battle, the approximately 15,000 Afghan government troops had been concentrated in four locations, the 11th Division garrison at the airport to the east, the First Corps headquarters to the northeast, the Ninth Division garrison to the west, and the First Border Guards Brigade to the north—all of which were reinforced by elements of the Special Guards dispatched from Kabul, the 31st Brigade, regional tribal brigades, state security military units, and police strike forces. About 20,000 mujahedeen advanced against these positions from four directions.

As I stood at the southeast corner of the headquarters building, the shrill scream of bombs dropped from high altitude pierced the air. They sounded just like high-performance jets running a low-altitude sortie. Most mujahedeen pressed themselves against the walls. In Dari, Wardak shouted, "Sit down!" A mujahed at the opposite end of the building ran across the courtyard and dove into the bomb shelter near the vegetable garden. Seconds later, when the bombs hit less than 200 yards to the

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[1]See "Operation Avalanche and Soviet Capitulation," *The American Spectator*, April 1988.

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north, the explosions sounded exactly like a nearby thunderbolt, with the crack of lightning followed instantaneously by the boom of thunder. I stepped behind the building, and a moment later a shower of hot metal fragments clattered against the tin roof. When I glanced around the corner, the plumes of smoke had already risen a few hundred feet into the sky.

Wardak asked, "Is this the first time you have been bombed?" I answered that I had had that privilege on a trip to Kabul province in 1985. "But they didn't know where you were then," he said. "They know this location exactly. They were here only a day ago, and the position is on their maps." After pausing to issue instructions to an assistant, he continued: "It is better to get down low when they bomb. That reduces your profile—makes you less of a target. It is best to lie down. But that is considered a disgrace here, so I just tell the mujahedeen to sit down."

After nightfall, radio contact was established with the front. "No casualties," Wardak reported. "The mujahedeen have established fixed positions. The fighting will get quiet soon. The mujahedeen will settle down for the night because they do not want to hit each other." His men then relayed the report by radio to Peshawar and also passed on Wardak's order for six APC batteries and two mechanics who could jump-start some of the captured vehicles. Meanwhile, the general dictated messages to be taken to his commanders. He ordered mujahedeen near the 11th Division garrison to cross the Kabul River in the night and to create a fire base to put additional pressure on the First Corps headquarters in the morning. Under cover of mortar fire, their infantry units were to attempt to outflank the defenders to the right. In addition, he sent instructions calling up some idle mujahedeen forces from rear areas to put more weight on the airport front.

Faintly illuminated by the light of a quarter moon and the glow of his Kent cigarette, Wardak alternately addressed his aides and assessed the military picture. "We will win," he asserted, "both in Jalalabad and Kabul."

I asked what kind of options remained for the other side. He responded: "Their forces are outnumbered and surrounded. They have airpower, but even if supplemented by air strikes flown from the Soviet Union, that cannot be decisive." I inquired whether his stocks of Stinger missiles, deliveries of which had ceased more than a year ago, had run out. He said that some still remained but that they were ineffective against high-altitude attacks by MiG 27s.

"The enemy has few options," he continued. "They might fire their SCUD missiles at Pakistan. But at what targets? What can they destroy that will make a difference? On the other hand, when Shevardnadze said the Afghan regime had been equipped with 'all types of modern weapons,' there were rumors that they might use chemical weapons on the battlefield. But these kinds of things cannot turn the war around." After taking a final drag on his cigarette and tossing aside the butt, he concluded: "Unless the Soviets intervene with their ground forces —and intervene in a truly massive way—we will win."

Wardak's optimism was understandable. In less than a week, his three principal commanders in the area—Pahlawan, Shamali, and Nadarjan—had negotiated the surrender of the Samarkhiel garrison's 540 men, overrun a major base, and captured hundreds of tons of weapons and ammunition. Moreover, only fifteen mujahedeen had been killed and fifty injured, while enemy losses were estimated at 300 killed and eighty wounded. →

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But unlike other resistance military leaders, who claimed that Jalalabad would fall within days, Wardak argued that the battle would take more time. He said that mujahedeen fighters, proficient at guerrilla combat, needed to learn the ropes of conventional warfare, and that coordination had so far been lacking. When NIFA's fighters moved into battle, the parties on the other fronts failed to engage the enemy, thereby enabling government forces to concentrate their firepower. Wardak indicated, however, that the southern and western fronts had been expected to join the battle that day and the northern front would probably do so tomorrow.

I asked which side would gain the advantage over time. "Logistics are good for our side," he explained, gesturing in the direction of the open road we had driven from the Khyber Pass. "For the other side, this is a problem. The city is suffering—they have no food. The road to Kabul has been cut. As you can see, the airport is closed. So how can the enemy forces get resupplied? They have sent some helicopters, maybe to evacuate the VIPs or maybe to send in reinforcements. But helicopters can carry only limited amounts of supplies, and we have already shot one down."

I inquired how long it would take to win. "No one can predict that," Wardak answered. "There are just too many variables. But it is only a matter of time." □

THE PUBLIC POLICY

THE CAPITAL GAINS MANDATE

by Jeb Bush

No, it wasn't Willie Horton or the Pledge of Allegiance—the issue that took the prize for sheer demagoguery in last year's presidential campaign was, of all things, the capital gains tax rate. And the candidate who led the charge in misrepresenting what the issue was all about was Governor Michael Dukakis, who, with class-warfare rhetoric, argued that a cut in the tax would be a "$40 billion giveaway for all of Bush's rich friends."

Well, the election is a thing of memory now and President Bush, carrying out his campaign pledge, has called for lowering the tax bite on capital gains from a destructively high 33 percent rate to 15 percent. The outcome of the debate on this issue—with the administration on one side and the congressional Democratic leadership on the other—will help determine the question of whether the United States is really serious about being competitive in the global economy.

Check the record: on three occasions in the past ten years, Congress has changed the effective tax rate on capital gains. On two of those occasions, economic growth and opportunity were the winners.

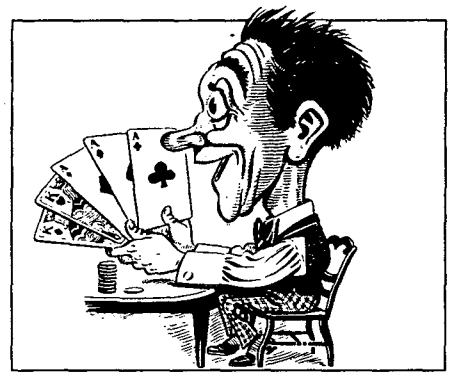
In 1978, the Steiger Amendment helped stimulate free enterprise-driven high growth in areas like the Silicon Valley. Again, in 1981, a second supply-side cut brought the top marginal rate down to 20 percent on capital gains.

Thus, despite the sour-grape arguments of the Democratic opposition, it's clear that the economic activity of the early 1980s was enhanced by supply-side cuts. Close to 20 million jobs have been created since 1981. Let liberal opponents of the cuts argue against that.

Yet, even after the stunning success of these pro-growth tax rate cuts, the liberals in Congress actually argued against success by doing away with the capital gains differential in 1986. That year, in order to achieve a comprehensive tax package, the Reagan Administration acquiesced and the rate was in effect increased to as much as 33 percent. With what result?

Again, check the record: columnist Warren Brookes recently cited Treasury figures to demonstrate that since passage of the Steiger Amendment, increasing amounts in capital gains have been declared—and more taxes paid—even though the rates were lower. When the capital gains rate was increased, fewer gains were declared and the Treasury took in less revenue. Proving? That people obviously have less propensity to sell homes, stocks, businesses, or other assets if the tax on sales is too high. The result is reduced investment and economic activity.

The bottom line, it seems to me, is that all the energy currently being expended in expressing concern over leveraged buyouts could better be spent by creating incentives via the capital gains differential, in order to create equity rather than pile up debt.



Critics of the Bush Administration's tax cut initiative have attacked it on three fronts.

First, they cite the budget deficit—ignoring the economic fact that (contrary to their predictions) previous capital gains cuts have resulted in increased revenue. Indeed, according to Treasury Department estimates, the Bush capital gains cut would yield more than $5 billion in higher revenues by the end of 1990, while at the same time creating thousands of new jobs.

The critics' second argument is, once again, the old class-warfare appeal. Like candidate Dukakis, they charge that the cut would be "another giveaway for the rich." Fact: the most recent cut in capital gains resulted in the richest one percent of Americans paying a significantly higher share of the total tax burden.

No, the primary beneficiary of the Bush plan isn't "the rich" the liberal demagogues love to flog but entrepreneurs of all classes who are given incentive to risk their capital—and create jobs—by a capital gains tax differential.

Third, critics led by House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rostenkowski are opposed to the capital gains tax reduction because it is too soon to tinker with so-called 1986 tax simplification legislation. In order to compete in a very competitive world, we need to stimulate savings and investment over consumption and debt. This objective outweighs the admirable objective of consistency in the tax code. And for simplicity, why do all the accountants I know walk around with constant smiles on their faces?

Reduction of the capital gains tax will also help accomplish a key Bush Administration priority: rebuilding our inner cities through enterprise zones. Such reduction, combined with the other aspects of zone legislation—property tax deferrals, sales and employment tax abatements—provides entrepreneurs incentives for investment, offering hope of bringing these areas into the nation's economic mainstream and helping disadvantaged members of minority groups realize the American dream.

The strong support of the President and Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp for enterprise zones stems from one simple fact—government programs alone cannot do the job. If there's any lesson we should have learned during the past thirty years, it is that only an active private sector can turn the South Bronx, East Los Angeles, and Miami's Overtown into economically viable areas.

In the final analysis, the capital gains issue is about more than just taxes and budgets. It's about competition. How can we expect to maintain our competitive position—much less pre-eminence—in the world marketplace if America's productive capacities are burdened at every turn?

It's time we relearned the economic lessons of history. As we compete against Japan, which has a low capital gains tax, and West Germany and other European nations, which have no capital gains tax, let's not go into the fight with one hand tied behind our backs. □

Jeb Bush is a businessman in Miami, Florida.

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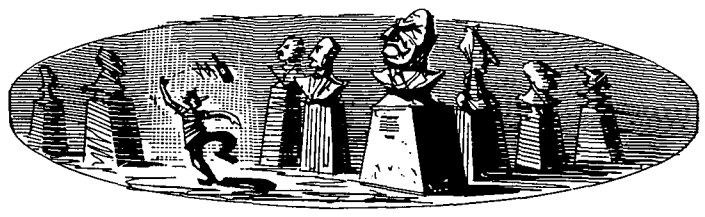

CHICKEN KOOP

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Any fair-minded deliberations on the life and labors of Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, whose attempt to introduce into American fashion the uniform of the Paraguayan navy failed so dismally, must begin with the laudations he received in the spring of 1981 immediately after his nomination. The April 8, 1981, *Louisville Times* spoke for many Liberal news organizations when it observed that "he is a religious extremist who doubts the wisdom of the constitutional separation of church and state, opposes common forms of contraception, and condemns followers of mainline religious groups that don't agree with his rigid opposition to abortion. . . . Dr. Koop scares us . . . his position on important issues clearly disqualifies him from becoming surgeon general." And Sen. Edward M. Kennedy voiced the sentiments of Capitol Hill's remnant, saying, "an even greater concern is Dr. Koop's seeming insensitivity to issues affecting women. In statement after statement, he has endorsed a cruel, outdated, patronizing, and discredited stereotype of women. . . ." Senator Kennedy, whose attention to women's sensitivity is widely celebrated and frequently immoral, then entered upon a campaign of vilification against Dr. Koop that lasted nine months.

So boisterous and defamatory did the campaign become that one would have expected the Surgeon General to remain for years as one of Liberalism's bugbears. That was the fate of other objects of Liberal scrupling, such as former Attorney General Edwin Meese and former Secretary of the Interior James Watt. But the game pediatrician from Philadelphia's Children's Hospital has come down through the bloody years of Reaganism laden with honors. Former critic Henry Waxman (D.-Calif.) speaks of his "tremendous integrity." And Mr. Jeffrey Levi of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force extols Dr. Koop as "someone who we deeply admire. He can talk about homophobia [sic] and discrimination with the best of them."

R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. is editor-in-chief of The American Spectator.

How is it that this early opponent of so many of Liberalism's noble causes has survived? He is that rarity among men of science, the intuitive pol. He came to Washington denouncing abortion, homosexuality, pornography, and more, but he caught on fast. He is a man of superlative political intuition, as could be spotted late in his confirmation hearings when he proclaimed, "It is not my intent to use any government post as a pulpit for ideology." Then he took a swat at the administration's policy on baby formula in the under-developed world.

In those early months many conservatives were ebullient over Dr. Koop's nomination. He was a moralizer for their family-first causes, identified by the *Washington Post* as "one of the nation's leading opponents of legalized abortion." Before Dr. Koop's arrival in the limelight, the office of Surgeon General was as obscure as that of the Librarian of Congress and just as controversial. The Surgeon General leads the 7,299 members of the Public Health Service's Commissioned Corps in the effort to promote health. He is to inspire the Republic's 545,000 public health officials to greater feats on behalf of a sound body and sound mind. He is, as one senator solemnly stated, America's "Voice of Public Health," and up until recent years that Voice has been confident and serene; for with this century's great advances in nutrition, hygiene, and medical science, American longevity has increased at unparalleled rates.

In recent years, however, all the nooks and crannies of American life have been penetrated by politics. The Voice grows apprehensive and grim. The office of Surgeon General is now a useful tool by which New Age Liberals can further tyrannize Americans with the New Age's bogus fears and procrustean remedies. All the constituent elements of the New Age now barrage the Surgeon General's office with their shining visions. Thus he must endure the feminists, the militant pederasts, the extreme environmentalists, the consumerists, and the Naderites of every genus or brave their contumely. Either way, the Voice cannot be as hearty as the public record reveals American health to be.

It is not clear that Surgeon General Koop recognized at the time of his nomination the crucial position his new job held in modern American politics. His prior statements were not necessarily politically motivated. He was an evangelical Christian, and a belief in the immorality of abortion and homosexuality was only a consequence of his piety. As with most evangelical Christians, he was not on the offensive, expanding the power of church against state; rather he was the embattled believer attempting to preserve traditional morality from the onslaughts of New Age ideologues directing the police power of the state against the church. But once in office Dr. Koop proved his modern political mettle, which is to say his capacity for publicity, braggadocio, and sniffing out the course of least resistance. Thus as the months slipped by so did Surgeon General Koop, and in June 1987 our own Tom Bethell awarded the Surgeon General his Strange New Respect Award "for putting condoms before continence." Bethell confers this award upon that conservative who suddenly rises in the esteem of Liberals by seeing the world from their point of view and making a heroic point of his tergiversations.

I do not mean to quibble with Bethell, but I cannot see that Dr. Koop was ever a conservative. Rather he has always been a sciolist, skating zealously on the surface of things. To be sure he began as a gifted pediatrician, manifesting a profound sympathy for the victims of birth defects, whose impairments he dutifully corrected. But, aside from this sympathy for the young and his commitment to religion, his approach to all other public matters appears to be shallow if zealous. From opposing abortion and homosexuality he has slipped into a mindless tolerance, with no explanation offered. His solution to the spread of AIDS is the placebo propounded by all dope-fetchers, to wit: he urges education. Furthermore, he is an aficionado of the condom. He beseeches the sexually aroused —whether homosexual or heterosexual—to roll on those condoms, consult a nearby sex manual, and recall all relevant data proffered in Sex Ed. Sex education is the cure for all the perils of Eros, according to Dr. Koop, and the great enlightenment should begin with kindergarten and continue until all kinks have been covered. If Dr. Koop has his way Americans will be the most erudite sex partners in the world and condoms will be everywhere.

Truth be known, sex education has been as much a failure as drug education. The National Institute of Justice

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has actually found that certain approaches to drug education encourage drug use. Who doubts that certain approaches to sex education have started the pipes to warm in the central heating systems of more than a few teenagers? How sex education might benefit kindergarteners who have only recently discovered that their private parts are useful in discharging bodily waste, I cannot imagine. But the child who has just discovered that the bed is not a toilet ought not to be burdened with further knowledge of the bed's many useful purposes. One does not have to be a disciple of Dr. Freud to recognize that such a superabundance of knowledge imparted at so early an age could cause confusion that might haunt a person all the days of his life. I pass on.

Dr. Koop has not honored his promise not to turn his office into a "pulpit." Throughout his tenure he has preached from it on behalf of all manner of trendy kookery and intolerance. As is typical of the modern political operator, he populates his crusades with good guys and fall guys. Businessmen are often the fall guys. His campaign against tobacco is a campaign against the tobacco tycoon who peddles "disease, disability, and death." When he interloped into the issue of television violence, he fastened upon the "network executives" whom he pronounced "caught between their conscience and their pocketbooks." Last summer, when his report on nutrition came out, he again identified the tycoons of the food industry as the greedy malefactors of our cholesterol count. And when it comes to one of his favorite subjects—AIDS—he castigates hospital personnel unwilling to treat AIDS patients. Well, after proper precautions are taken, hospital personnel should minister to all patients, but it is curious that this man of science opposes mandatory AIDS tests in hospitals and clinics.

It is not out of libertarian scruple that he opposes these tests. In fact personal liberty has no place in his constellation of values. With no evidence that smoke from the cigarette of another is any more pernicious to the nonsmoker than the smoker's perfume or noisy chatter, Dr. Koop would ban all smoking everywhere. Pursuant to some dietary ideal he would order food producers to tamper with their products and labels. He would simply ban TV shows that offend his protean standards. This is not the work of a systematic mind but of a modern pol who knows how to exploit the apprehensions of the public. There are a lot of such charlatans around nowadays, and they have contributed to a very unwholesome state of mind. Americans are actually living much longer, no thanks to Dr. Koop; but they are living in dread of all the horrors that he and his fellow zealots have dreamed up.

Last summer, during the unveiling of his report on nutrition, Dr. Koop revealed precisely how unserious a man he is. Despite his exhortations to nutritional perfection, meticulous hygiene, salubrious living, Dr. Koop is quite fat. He consumes junk foods happily and two martinis with lunch even more happily. He brags about taking no exercise and being a workaholic. And so when asked at the unveiling of his nutritional report why he ignored its dietary recommendations in his own life, he replied, "For myself I'm counting on my genes. If your cholesterol is OK and you think your genes are good, why should you sit on a hill the rest of your life and eat yogurt?" Or for that matter deny yourself the pleasure of a smoke? Genes are indeed a major determinant of health. Having admitted as much Dr. Koop might now do the noble thing and retire. If he worries the citizenry any further our next Surgeon General will have to be a clinical psychiatrist. □

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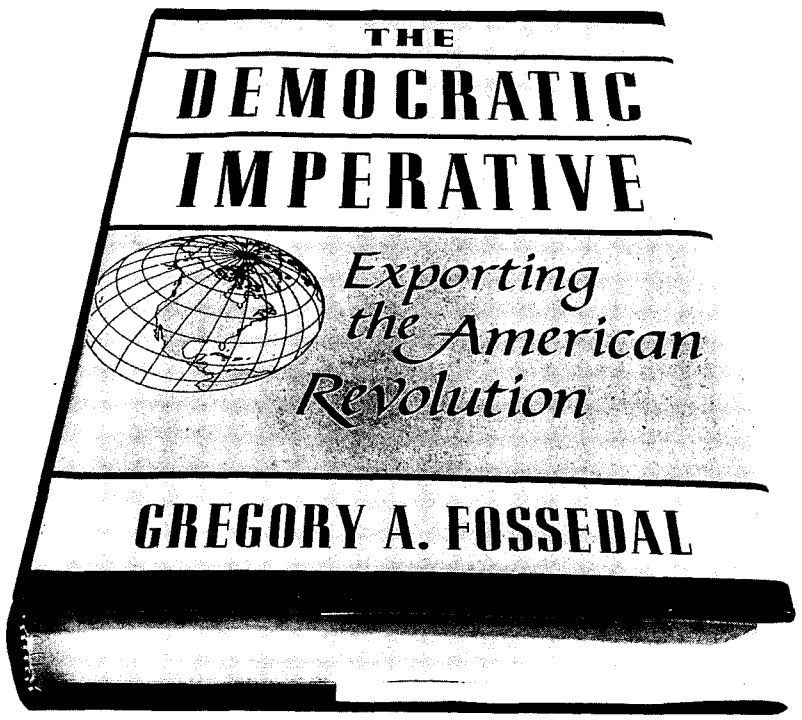

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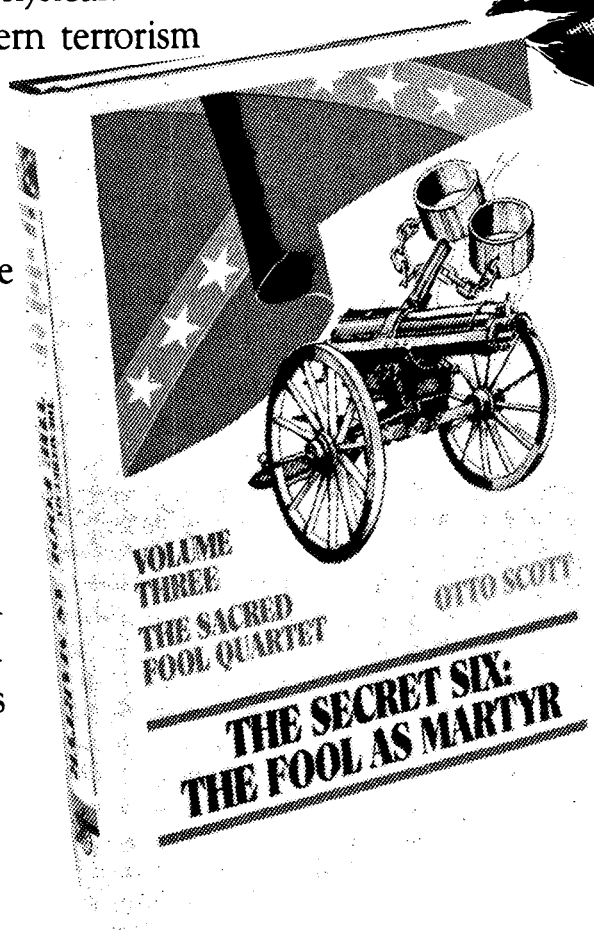

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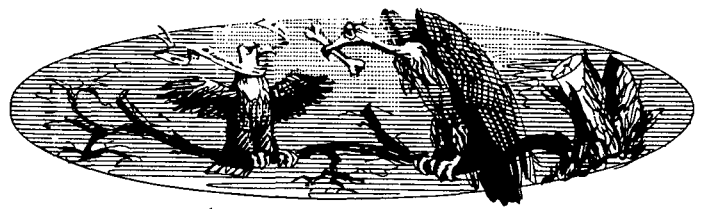


LOSING ON BOTH FRONTS

by Irwin M. Stelzer

America's businesses are fighting a two-front war. And losing. Or so they think.

On one front they face the Japanese, mighty exporters and now major acquirers of U.S. real estate and industrial properties. On the other they face a newly renascent Europe about to marshal its previously fragmented forces under the unifying banner of "1992."

As American businessmen and some nervous politicians see it, the Japanese have already won the battle for world markets in most industries. Their companies dominate the consumer electronics industry, are capturing increasing shares of the machine tool, semiconductor, and automotive markets, and stand a good chance of repeating that success in financial services. Not content with winning these markets, the Japanese are now buying up America, either by acquiring real estate and businesses, or by building new plants here. America is "a colony-in-the-making," warns Clyde Prestowitz, Jr., a former U.S. trade negotiator now resident at the Carnegie Endowment, and author of *Trading Places.*[1]

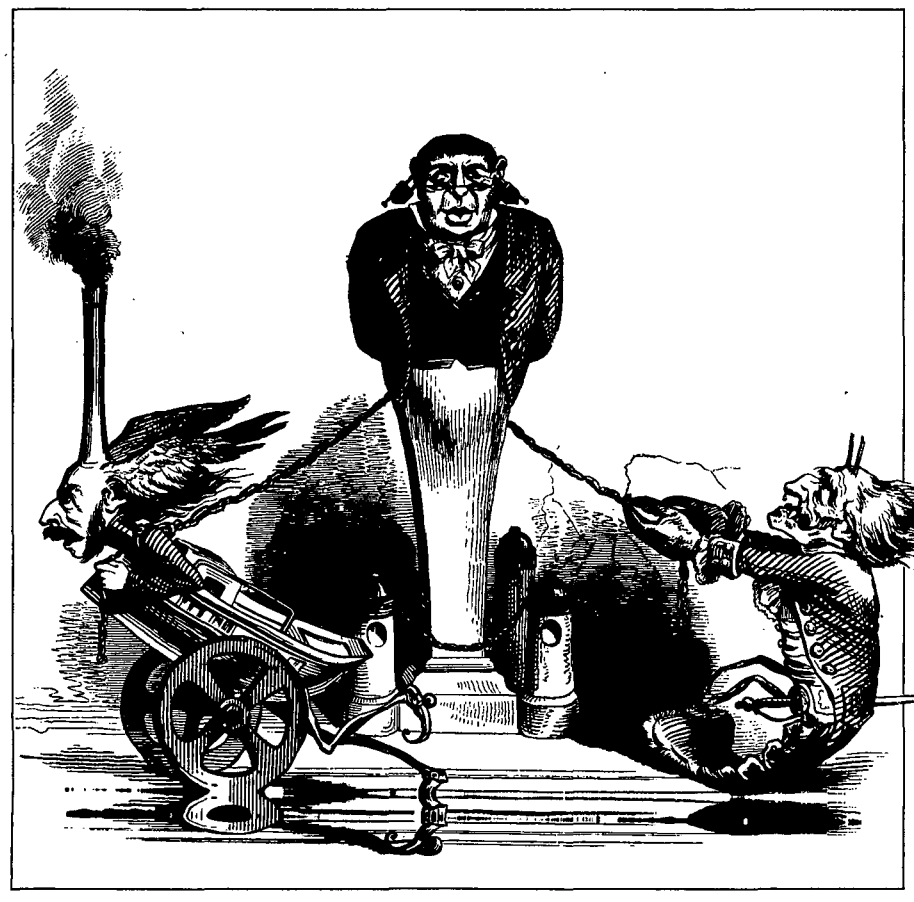
This fear of Japan has three strands. First, we are seen to be losing out in the trade battle. Recent data certainly provide some basis for concern. In the fiscal year that ended on March 31, Japan's trade surplus rose by four percent. More ominously for America, Japan's surplus with the U.S. was on the rise as the year ended—21 percent higher in March 1989 than it had been in the same month of 1988.

Second, the Japanese are becoming increasingly active acquirers of American assets. Japan's foreign asset holdings, which rose from $11.5 billion to $180 billion between 1980 and 1986, are expected to climb to $853 billion in 1995, most of them in America. For some reason, Americans find it particularly galling that half of the office space in downtown Los Angeles is now in Japanese hands. And they worry about Japan's rising purchases of pieces of America's financial institutions.

Finally, the Japanese are building more and more facilities in America. One would think that Americans would be overjoyed at this development. The British, for example, rejoiced when Fujitsu announced that it would build a £400-million semiconductor plant in County Durham, creating 1,500 jobs. The *Financial Times* called it "one of the investment coups of the decade."

But Prestowitz argues that such joy should be restrained, because the job-creating benefits of Japanese investments are a mirage. He cites the case of Toyota's auto plant in Kentucky. Toyota hired a Japanese construction company to build the plant. It bought wheels from another Japanese company, and was financed by a Japanese bank. The "verticle investment" mirrored the way Japan manages its tourist business: Japanese come to America on Japan Air Lines, take Japanese tour buses to Japanese-owned hotels, and dine in Japanese restaurants.

In the end, all of this destroys jobs. Or so Prestowitz says, citing one study estimating that for each job created in a Japanese-owned factory in the U.S., two are destroyed in other American businesses. In short, America had better begin looking its Asian gift horses in the mouth. Furthermore, massive Japanese investment in America will soon make us a Japanese colony, the Prestowitz school contends. Influence follows money. American politicians report themselves more and more subject to the needs of Japanese investors. The governor of Tennessee says he makes more trips to Tokyo than Washington because "that's where we can get some real help." A University of California scholar complains that "Japan has undue influence in the U.S."; Lester Thurow, dean of the management school at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, adds, "They've learned how to play us like a violin."



Add to all of this four new facts:

- American politicians have begun to wonder why we should continue to expend large sums defending Japan. "This is surely the first time in history that a territory in the process of being colonized has actually paid for the right to defend the colonizer," writes Prestowitz.
- Japan is becoming increasingly aggressive in its relations with America. Masauru Yoshitomi, director general of Japan's Economic Planning Agency, told a group of business economists that Japanese policies "are now . . . in a position to influence the value of the dollar and hence the dollar interest rates and stock market prices in Wall Street." The fact is old; its admission is new. And Japan has been flexing its financial muscles at recent international financial meetings, lecturing America on everything from the handling of its domestic budget to its policies toward Latin American debtors.
- American efforts to get Japan to ease its restrictions on American imports seem to have stalled. U.S. farmers are far more efficient than their Japanese counterparts, but Japan won't allow most American agricultural products into the country. American airplane makers have far better and cheaper military products than do the Japanese, but Japan won't buy them. Instead, the Japanese concocted a "joint venture" that would give them access to sophisticated computer and jet engine technology in return for doing what any free trader would do in this case anyhow—buy American.
- All of these complaints are overlaid with increasingly ugly charges of racism—by both sides. The Japanese, who hold $96.7 billion of American assets at last count, point to the fact that they own far less of America than do the British ($133.8 billion) or the Canadians ($129.5 billion). Yet no one seems worried about becoming a British colony. So, the Japanese conclude, America's professed fears are merely new versions of the old "yellow peril" paranoia. Americans, on the other

[1]Basic Books, $19.95.

Irwin M. Stelzer is chairman of the Regulated Industries Group, Harvard University, and an American correspondent for the London Sunday Times.

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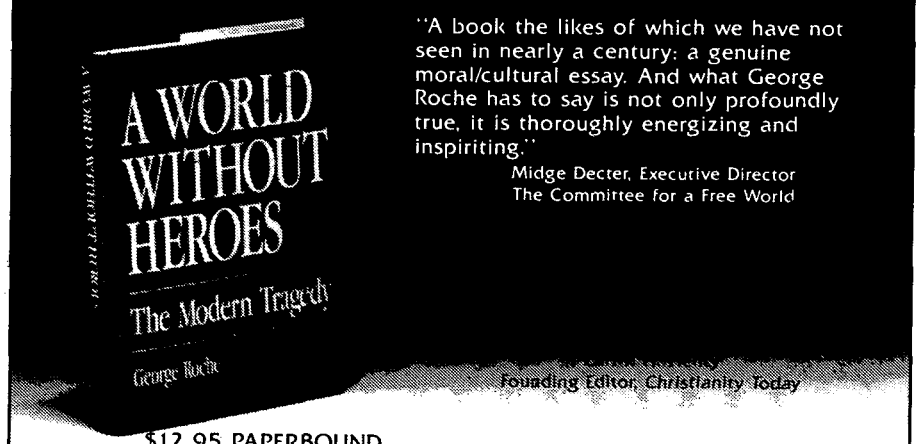
hand, contend that the Japanese, when confronted with charges of protectionism, refuse to consider them on their merits. Instead they resort to racist and anti-Semitic responses. The racist response is that America's ethnically and racially mixed society cannot compete with its purer-blooded Japanese rivals. Being so racially mixed, the work force is unable to achieve the level of cooperation necessary to produce high-quality goods. And, the argument continues, it is the shoddiness of American products, not Japanese restrictions, that is creating the U.S. trade deficit. One Japanese writer says that "the large number of different races and ethnic groups" in America is "reflected in the quality of your products, in the difficulties you have in managing things."

A WORLD WITHOUT HEROES:
THE MODERN TRAGEDY

By George Roche



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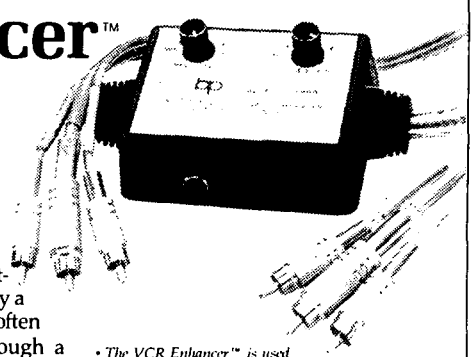

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The anti-Semitic argument used by the Japanese is that the complaints against them are made by America's Jews, frustrated at their declining power over the world's economy. The *New Republic* reports that several bestsellers, marketed in "Jewish corners" of Japan's bookstores, contend that an international Jewish conspiracy wants to destroy Japan's economy, so that the Jews will have no rival contestant for world domination. Whether the Japanese believe this nonsense, or only say they do to appease their Arab oil suppliers, no one knows.

So much for the Asian front. On the European front things seem to be going equally badly for American industry. European governments have more or less decided to remove all internal barriers to the free movement of goods and people by 1992. This would create a unified market of some 320 million consumers. Not a bad thing. But the socialists in control of the European Community's Brussels bureaucracy have attached to that laudable goal a more pernicious one: a "social dimension" (Neil Kinnock, the leader of Britain's Labour party, more candidly calls it "the socialist dimension") that includes increasing the reach of the welfare state and placing trade union representatives on corporate boards of directors.

These measures will surely raise production costs, reducing European industry's ability to compete with imports from America and Japan. So the Brussels eurocrats—12,000 of the highest paid, most perk-ridden politicians in Europe—will be driven to adopt protectionist measures, to force consumers to pay prices high enough to fund welfare schemes that these same consumers, in their roles as taxpaying voters, refuse to endorse. Only Britain's Margaret Thatcher has had the sense and courage to rail against this turn of events.

In short, American industry may soon be faced with a "Fortress Europe," a huge market at least partially closed to its goods. A Commerce Department study has already identified key areas in which the European Commission is developing standards designed to exclude American-made telecommunications and software products; banking rules are being drafted to cripple American banks' ability to compete in Europe; and "European content" regulations have been adopted to require television broadcasters to use mostly European-made programs. Creation of a Fortress Europe would be no small matter: the U.S. and the European Community have the world's largest trading relationship—some $1.2 trillion in goods and services is exchanged annually.

America's response to the twin Japanese and European threat varies between none and a resort to old-fashioned protectionism. In the case of Europe, as in other areas, the Bush Administration has no discernible policy. It generally approves of greater European unity, but has no policy-level official in charge of formulating a coherent response to the Fortress Europe threat. Like the Iran-contra deal, "1992" is an item that apparently escaped Bush's attention during the eight years of his vice presidency. So he entered the Oval Office with no ready response. Informed sources report that leading American businessmen are stunned at the ignorance of administration officials; they seem to know nothing about the political battles that will shape Europe's ultimate trading posture, post 1992, and even less about the specific American interests threatened.

As for Japan, we seem to be witnessing a widening schism between presidential trade representative Carla Hills and Democrats in Congress. Hills is preparing to get tough with Japan, to pry its markets open, threatening retaliation if restrictions are not removed. Congress feels that's not enough. It is leaning increasingly toward "managed trade," a system of dividing up world markets, product-by-product, to assure that America gets a "fair share" of each market. This is, of course, a means of substituting a bureaucrat's judgment as to which goods should be made at home, and which imported, for the market's judgment.

All this confusion diverts attention from attainable policies. It is in America's power to reduce its budget deficit by bringing spending under control; America can develop policies to increase its savings rate; America can improve the education and hence productivity of its work force by making its schools safer from physical and intellectual thuggery, the latter by academics who regard great Western thought as racist, and therefore expungable from the curriculum; America can decide to make Japan pay for its own defense. But blaming foreign devils for domestic problems is easier.

So the outlook for preservation of the generally free international trading system that contributed so much to postwar prosperity grows dim. Japanese protectionism, Europe's inward-looking, socialist drive toward 1992, and America's incoherent response seem likely to produce rising trade barriers. It will be ironic, indeed, if the only large, import-hungry consumer market in the 1990s proves to be Gorbachev's Russia. □

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executive branch, and the Jim Wright story is making most news organizations take longer looks at Wright and his colleagues. Newt Gingrich has scored in more ways than one might realize.

No, the best explanation for the non-treatment of Dingell is the obvious one, actually one of the dirty little secrets of the news business in Washington: Dingell and his staffers are sources for stories, and reporters, dear reader, tend to protect good sources.

• • •

There is at least one reporter who understands separation of powers controversies in Washington—the *New York Times*'s Robert Pear. Indeed, the latest flap between White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray and Secretary of State James A. Baker III—a flap over Baker's agreement with Congress on contra aid—can't be understood without reference to Pear's perceptive reporting.

According to the accord Baker negotiated with Congress, the administration can continue aid to the contras at the current rate of $4.5 million a month for food, clothing, shelter, and medical supplies through February 1990. But there is a catch: any of four congressional committees may veto sending money after November 30, 1989.

On March 24, when news of this agreement unofficially broke, Pear was the only reporter who characterized it as "a legislative veto," noting that it would be "unconstitutional if it was formally put into law." "For decades," Pear observed (as no one else did), "Presidents have tried to preserve executive power by resisting such arrangements. It was a measure of Mr. Baker's desire for a compromise that he agreed." On March 25, when the news was officially disclosed, Pear wrote that Baker "and President Bush had to give to the congressional leadership unusual powers of review on executive decisions to gain Democratic support." Building his story with comments from Robert H. Bork and former Assistant Attorney General Charles J. Cooper—a bit of enterprising reporting also done by no one else—Pear now observed that this was "more than a legislative veto; it is a requirement for congressional preclearance." Pear noted that the Justice Department had "vehemently objected to such arrangements" when written into legislation and reported—again, as no one else had—that Justice had not had a chance to review the Baker deal.

There was still an outstanding question: What did White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray think? The next day Pear answered that question in a front page story. Gray had constitutional reservations. Speaking on the record, Gray told the *Times* that he had not reviewed the agreement and in fact had asked for a copy only after reading about it "in the press"—probably in the *New York Times*. In his story, Pear summarized his discoveries of the past few days, writing that the "congressional veto provision struck a raw nerve Friday among lawyers at the White House and the Justice Department, who strive to preserve presidential power against encroachments by Congress." And he dug out a new fact—that on March 16 the administration had formed a "working group" to combat the "erosion of Presidential authority." Pear did not miss the obvious conclusion: "Mr. Baker was evidently consulting more closely with congressional leaders than with colleagues in the Bush Administration."

It was the next day, a Sunday, that Baker, on ABC's "This Week," sought to put Gray in his place, denying that the agreement weakened presidential authority and maintaining, to the contrary, that it amounted to a "restoration of presidential power." At this point the story finally got play everywhere, not just in the *Times*, proving that once an issue is personalized, the media generally will pay attention. At this point the story predictably changed, the question becoming how long Gray could stay in his job. Chief of Staff John Sununu rebuked Gray for going public, and press secretary Marlin Fitzwater got a laugh at Gray's expense by opening a news briefing with this: "First of all, I want to announce that Boyden Gray concurs in the constitutionality of the Easter Egg Roll. I checked with him myself." The conventional wisdom now had it that Gray should never have spoken up, that he was an eccentric, a methanol enthusiast, and so on.

Actually, Baker and company might as well have blamed Pear for reporting and analyzing an issue that they doubtless wanted handled precisely the way that everyone but Pear reported it. Typical was the coverage by the *Washington Post*. While Pear was doing the intellectual heavy lifting on separation of powers, the *Post* was heavy into the Baker line of "bipartisanship," celebrating in a headline that the agreement was halting years of wrangling between the White House and Congress. The *Post* didn't report the constitutional dimension of the story until Gray expressed his reservations, and even then it failed to do justice to the issues involved. Pear deserves credit for bringing to light the deeper implications of an agreement that too many in the media, like the *Post*, were willing to take at face value.

Watch for fallout. Yes, Gray has been politically damaged inside the administration. But he may have given himself up for a good cause—not a bad thing to do, even if unintended. If he hadn't spoken out, Tom Wicker and David Broder, among other columnists, probably would not have written on the issue. Wicker was incredulous that the Baker accord could represent any kind of restoration of presidential power, and Broder wrote that it was "a blow to both the Bush presidency and the authority any chief executive should try to preserve." Baker, meanwhile, has been on the defensive, trying to explain why what he did is best for the President. It's doubtful Bush will be as trusting of Baker. Some of Jim's Teflon may be wearing off. □

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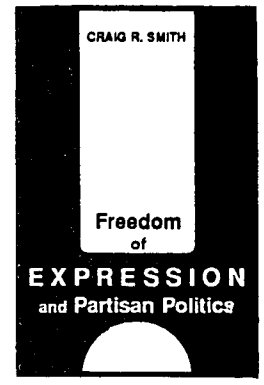

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Craig R. Smith is a professor of speech communication at California State University, Long Beach and president of the Freedom of Expression Foundation. He has also served as a political speechwriter for President Gerald Ford, campaign manager for Senator Bob Packwood, and a consultant to George Bush's presidential campaign.

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THE TALKIES

VERONICA AND VERA

by Bruce Bawer

Imagine a John Hughes cast hijacked by David Lynch, and you've got a pretty good idea of the territory covered by *Heathers*, a weird, provocative, and gruesomely witty black comedy directed by Michael Lehmann from a script by Daniel Waters. The setting—rendered in shadowless, chillingly cheery primary colors à la *Blue Velvet*—is Sherwood, Ohio, a veritable 1980s Winesburg, where, at Westerburg High, three rich, beautiful, and snobbish girls named Heather constitute "the most powerful clique in school." Our heroine is their classmate Veronica (Winona Ryder), whom they've admitted into their circle. Veronica is of two minds about the croquet-playing, jock-servicing Heathers: she can't bring herself to drop them, but she's put off by their snottiness and cruelty, and confides to her diary her wish for a "world without Heathers."

Along comes the new kid in town, Jason Dean (Christian Slater), who—for very good reasons, it turns out—is called J. D. Smart, sardonic, and jaded to the *n*th degree, the lean, black-clad motorcyclist has the laid-back manner of James Dean, the ironic drawl of Jack Nicholson, and the *modus operandi* of Jason, the bloodthirsty killer in the *Friday the 13th* movies. He's utterly psycho, and he comes by it fairly: a few years back he watched his mother perish in a building demolition at the hands of his dad, a cheerfully amoral real-estate developer. J. D. shares Veronica's distaste for the Heathers, and proceeds, with her help, to wipe out—in highly entertaining fashion—not only the Heathers' ringleader (known to all and sundry as Heather #1) but Westerburg's two bullying football heroes, artfully disguising all three deaths as suicides.

The deception works. And how does Westerburg High react to the supposed suicides of its three most popular students? Well, nobody's particularly upset. Since true reverence is foreign to most of these kids—whose attachments are as thin as rolling paper, and who respect nothing but good sex, Top-40 music, and fashionable clothing—the death of another human being has little meaning for them. A male classmate kneels at the coffin of Heather #1 and asks God, in the crudest possible language, how He could have robbed the world of such a hot broad. (Yes, even cruder than that.) In the church—which cinematographer Francis Kenny photographs with a dramatically low-angle, sharply tilted, fisheye-lensed camera in dim, otherworldly light, as if to suggest how alien to these kids are the values this place represents—one of the surviving Heathers smoothes down a stray hair with holy water. And later, when Veronica rifles Heather #1's locker and finds a trendy Swatch wristwatch, one of the surviving Heathers says, "She would've wanted you to have it, Veronica—she always said you couldn't accessorize for shit."

The kids' elders are little better. An ex-hippie teacher—proclaiming sagely that "whether you kill yourself or not is one of the most important decisions a teenager can make"—uses the deaths as an excuse to stage a be-in with full media coverage, and spends a class period asking her students to share their "feelings" about the supposed suicides. ("Are we gonna be tested on this?" one boy asks blandly.) At the funeral for Heather #1, the priest tells his flock that Jesus is "that righteous dude who can solve their problems." (Note the nice irony with which the traditional usage of the word *righteous* is played off against its infinitely more trivial slang usage; I can't recall a film that better underlined the failures of sensibility implicit in much current teen lingo.) And at the double funeral for the macho-jerk football stars—whose cleverly conceived "suicide note," forged by Veronica, makes them out to be homosexual lovers—the quarterback's equally macho dad stands over the coffin and, in perfect Donahue-show style, tells the assembled mourners, "My son was gay, and I love him. I love my gay son." In this little corner of America, sanctimonious pop-psych clichés have all but taken the place of genuine emotions and principles.

Grotesquely exaggerated though its vision of middle-American teendom may be, *Heathers* constitutes a perceptive moral commentary upon a very real phenomenon: a generation of teens whose only common value is "coolness," whose only god is fashion ("Grow up, Heather! Bulimia's so '87"), who take promiscuity for granted, who use the foulest language as a matter of course, and who find the signal achievements of Western culture utterly irrelevant to their lives and concerns. At Westerburg High, the kids read *Moby Dick* for English class (and a paperback copy of Melville's novel pops up totemically throughout the film), but its moral force doesn't stand a chance against, say, the decibel power of the inane rock song "Teenage Suicide: Don't Do It"—a tune, ubiquitous in the film, whose wedding of nihilistic discords and hollow message-mongering is too familiar a part of these kids' cultural diet for them to recognize its absurdity or offensiveness. Nor can these kids count on any moral direction from their parents or teachers, who, in a show of what they consider tolerance, have entirely abandoned their responsibilities in that line.

Fortunately, Westerburg High has a few outposts of decency. There's Betty, the awkward, bespectacled childhood friend—an admitted virgin!—whom Veronica dumped when the Heathers took her up. (The obvious allusion to Betty and Veronica, those emblems of fifties innocence from the old *Archie* comics, may be a bit too cute.) There's also fat, pathetic Martha (Dumptruck) Dunnstock, a favorite target of the Heathers' ridicule, whose actual (but botched) suicide attempt is smirkingly dismissed by Heather #2 as "just another case of a geek trying to imitate the popular people in school and failing miserably." And last but not least, there's Veronica, who, despite her complicity with J. D., has a conscience buried somewhere inside. (In the world of this movie, if it were any closer to the surface it wouldn't be believable.) Having pretended to herself through three murders that J. D. sought only to scare his victims and not to kill them, Veronica finally faces the truth. Or, rather, the truths—namely, that the elimination of Heather #1, far from purging Westerburg High of everything

Bruce Bawer is The American Spectator*'s movie reviewer.*

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she represents, has succeeded merely in promoting Heather #2 to the role of top bitch; that J. D. is, as she tells him, "fucking psychotic" ("You say tomato," he replies genially, "I say tomahto"); and that acts of kindness are finer ammunition against evil than acts of nihilistic destruction. Fundamentally, *Heathers* is the story—the singularly bizarre and hilarious story, to be sure—of the difficult awakening and ultimate triumph of virtue within one girl's soul.

Alas, in its closing sequence the film's uniqueness of theme and tone and situation slips away, and we realize that, on one level anyway, *Heathers* is simply a variation on the *Friday the 13th* movies, in which one teenager after another gets bumped off. And the picture's final moments bring to mind the endings of both *Carrie* and *Halloween*—films of considerably less ambition than this. At its best, however, *Heathers* is a splendid accomplishment—an inimitable combination of the outre and the verisimilar, as darkly funny and perversely serious an American movie as has come along in many a moon.

• • •

In many ways, the widely publicized new Soviet film *Little Vera* couldn't be more different from *Heathers*. Its gritty, realistic look and its objurgatory tone are a far cry from *Heathers*'s eerie prettiness and sophisticated japery; its grim setting—the city of Zhdanov, an industry-heavy port on the Sea of Azov—is a world or two away from Sherwood, Ohio. (Indeed, Zhdanov makes Gary, Indiana, look rather charming.)

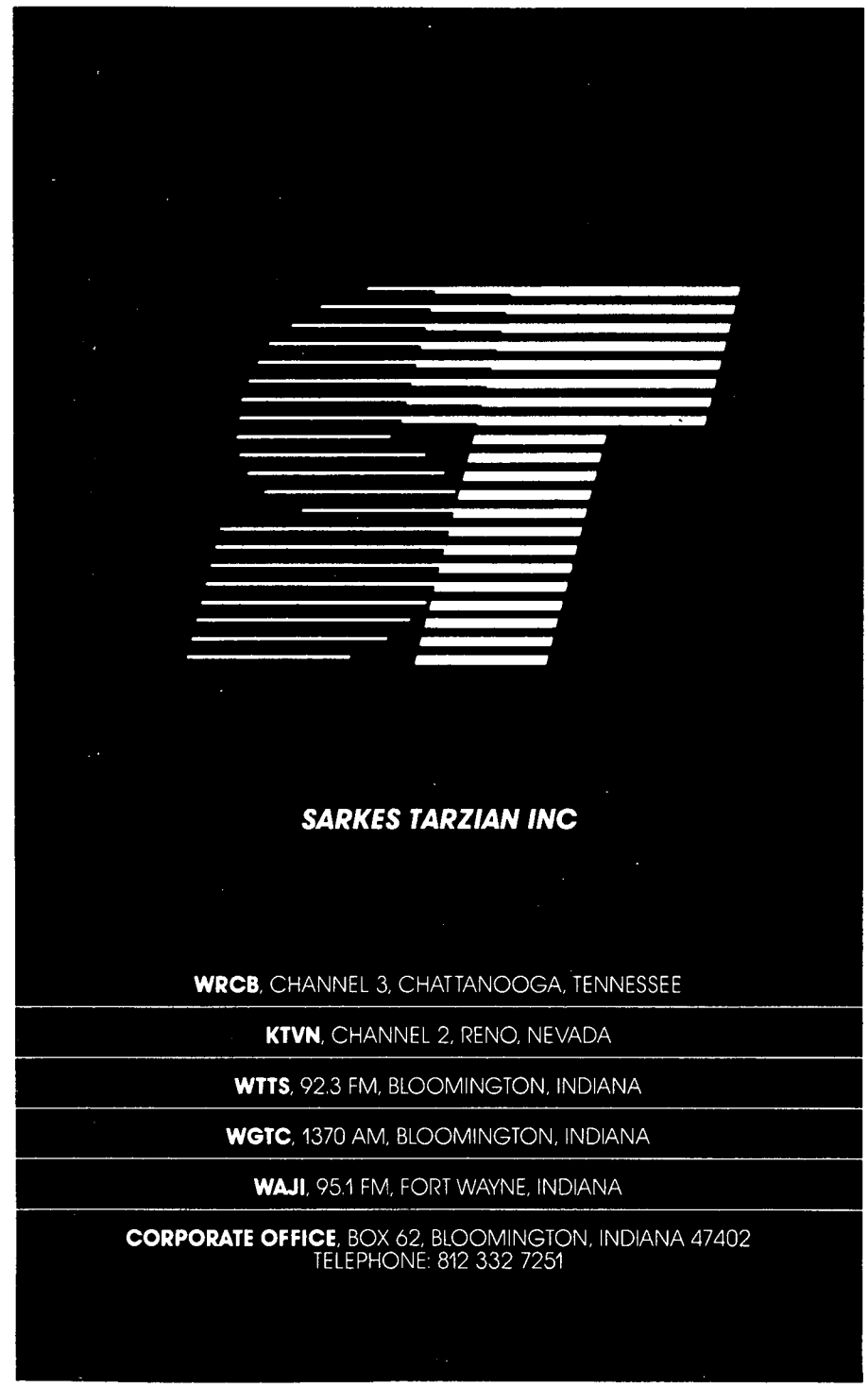
But in one sense, at least, the two films are strikingly similar. For *Little Vera*, like *Heathers*, centers on an attractive but troubled teenage girl whose plight we're meant to see as symptomatic of her society's failings. Played by Natalya Negoda (who, thanks to the miracle of glasnost, can currently be seen in the nonliterary pages of *Playboy*), the film's eponymous heroine resides in a small, shabby flat with her alcoholic truck-driver dad (Yuri Nazarov) and her complaisant factory-worker mother (Ludmila Zaitzeva). As the film opens, Dad is chewing Vera out: Mom has found an American $20 bill in her purse. How did she come by it? What did they do to deserve a daughter who smokes, parties, has American money, dresses like a slut? (Actually, in her bright red fingernails and blond-streaked bouffant hairdo, Vera looks quite a bit like Nancy Sinatra, circa 1966.) Where's her college acceptance? Where's her ambition? Why can't she be like her older brother, Victor (a Moscow physician)?

Every unhappy family may be unhappy in its own way, but director Vasily Pichul and writer Maria Khmelik (a husband-and-wife team) clearly intend for us to recognize the unhappiness of Vera's clan as emblematic of Russian life in the eighties. Just to round out the family portrait, Vera gets involved with—and eventually engaged to—Sergei (Andrei Sokolov), a good-looking college student whose sloth and lack of purpose rival hers. Invited to meet Mom and Dad, Sergei turns up in Bermuda shorts and departs after five minutes. But before long he moves in, and no sooner has he done so than he begins to needle Dad heartlessly. "You have a real smart-ass here!" Dad snaps at Vera. And Sergei encourages Vera's own formidable smart-ass tendencies: when an aunt sends her an old book called *Good Housekeeping* as a wedding gift, Vera and Sergei ridicule the inscription: "For Vera, the future housewife."

Patently, to these two members of Russia's Lost Generation, traditional Soviet values and ambitions are a joke. When Sergei asks Vera flippantly what her goal is, she quips: "We have a common goal, Sergei, Communism." Vera laughs a lot, but it's a deeply sad laugh whose target would seem to be life itself; it's as if she's laughing at the thought that anyone on earth can take anything seriously. For a time, to be sure, Sergei's company appears to satisfy her; but eventually the directionlessness of their existence together begins to gnaw at her. "This is supposed to be the happiest time of my life," she says, "and I just want to weep. My God, how can we go on like this?" Meanwhile, the tensions at home grow apace; the crisis comes when Dad, in a drunken rage, ventilates Sergei with a kitchen knife. Within a few hours, Sergei's in the hospital, Dad's in danger of arrest, Mom's threatening to perjure herself to save his skin, and Vera—well, Vera's caught in the middle.

It's all very vivid and interesting. But not a frame of this movie is particularly fresh. We've seen it all before—the long shots of garbage heaps and junkyards, the close-ups of bubbling pots of tomato sauce and rusty, dripping faucets—in dozens of American and European films, beginning with Italian neorealism and continuing down to such recent grimefests as *A Letter to Brezhnev*. Mainly, what makes *Little Vera* compelling is that it's not about Rome or Liverpool or Clairton, Pennsylvania; it's about some godforsaken burg in the *Soviet Union*. By *them*. It's got full frontal nudity, and a sex scene, and it shows how primitive Russian hospitals are, and it's candid about Soviet problems with gang violence and alcoholism and AIDS. It depicts a country where mothers bear unwanted babies so they can obtain bigger apartments, where everybody's always reaching for the vodka bottle or deciding to hit the sack because there's nothing else to do. Some of the slams at Mother Russia are astonishing: Dad, finally reconciled to Vera during a seaside picnic, hugs her under the rusted hull of a beached ship—an obvious symbol of the Soviet Empire run aground. In an even more stunning sequence, the camera pans the family's depressingly shabby kitchen while a tinny radio plays the "Internationale."

There is much to admire in this movie: the very fine performances (especially that of Miss Negoda), the sensitive direction, the courage of all concerned. But the critics who have celebrated *Little Vera* as great art (it has won prizes at the Venice, Montreal, and Chicago Film Festivals) would not, I think, be so forgiving of its failings were it the work of an American or English or French production team. One thinks in particular of Khmelik's script; though much of her dialogue (in translation, at least) is clever, even witty, she has altogether too heavy a touch. It's quite enough to see Dad weaving around the flat in a vodka-induced stupor; we hardly need to hear him whine that "no amount of drinking will help with this sort of life." Likewise, we could do without the immoderate irony of a line that occurs more than once: "Cherish the innocence of youth." (Fortunately, the most overblown touch of all has been lost in translation: *Malenkaya Vera*, the Russian-language title of this movie about people who have lost virtually all their faith in the Soviet system, literally means "Little Faith.") Granted, excess of this sort is as Russian as caviar and the KGB, but the proper place for hyperbolic Russian dialogue is in hyperbolic Russian movies (e.g., Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*); in the context of so realistic-looking a movie as *Little Vera*, it stands out like a samovar at a keg party. □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WRONG NUMBER: THE BREAKUP OF AT&T

Alan Stone/Basic Books/331 pp. $21.95

Melville J. Ulmer

This could have been a stunning book. Written by Alan Stone, a noted scholar at the University of Houston, it deals with a question that has puzzled households across the country: Why was the American Telephone and Telegraph Company dismantled by federal court order in 1982? The conventional answer, as reported in the press, was to introduce competition, an abstract reason by most counts and for a regulated public utility distinctly paradoxical. Yet any effort to probe further encounters mystery as well as high drama. AT&T was universally regarded as the world's greatest communications system, unmatched in efficiency as well as in scientific and technological progress.

Stone's *Wrong Number* explores this challenging episode in economic history with a degree of technical skill that, unfortunately, far exceeds the clarity of his exposition. We return to his legalistic style later. More important than its form is the message, a story shaped by a union of private greed and public passion. It begins in the late nineteenth century.

As soon as Alexander Graham Bell conveyed his first telephonic message ("Mr. Watson, come here; I want to see you") and incidentally filed a patent for his astonishing invention, it was evident that a new industry was born with a gold rush of promise. Almost before his assistant had a chance to reply, on that day in 1876, the courts were crammed with would-be rivals and pretenders. A bit later, as Bell started actual business operations, there were barefaced patent infringements. So from the beginning interlopers were present and active and, as we shall see, they multiplied to the end.

Nevertheless, by 1899, when AT&T was incorporated, a fully integrated business organization had been formed that, at least at the time, appeared impregnable. It embraced local telephone service, long distance, switching, transmission, and manufacture and ownership of customer telephones and other equipment. It also provided its own engineering, planning, and basic research through the already famed Bell Laboratories. It was a self-sufficient giant and the nature of its industry—the inherent interdependence of all of its activities—seemed to require that it be so.

Hence by the turn of the century AT&T seemed successful and secure, on the brink of a gigantic expansion that would bring telephones to virtually every home and business in the country—even though its original Bell patents had expired in 1893 and 1894. In their place stability was attained in the early 1920s by development of a so-called national regulated network manager system. AT&T was of course the manager and also sole carrier of long-distance calls. Local services were provided by local monopolies —subsidiaries of AT&T as well as independent companies, in many of which AT&T had financial interests.

The cautionary word in the above phrase is that the network was "regulated," for its significance was destined to intensify. Regulation grew from that of courts and legislatures in the earlier days to that of public utility commissions established in each relevant area. The latter fixed service rates, judged the complaints of users, and held companies responsible for end-to-end service, including the provision, maintenance, and repair of telephones, transmission lines, and switching equipment. It was generally agreed, as Stone puts it, that under this system "rates and profits were reasonable, technological progress remarkable."

AT&T therefore had neither cause nor a legal right to object to regulation, and never did. In return for a partial or wholly monopolistic franchise to perform an essential service, an official guardian of the public interest was universally regarded as essential. But the complexity of regulations in the telephone industry grew abruptly after the 1920s, and ominously so with the anti-Big Business sentiment borne by the New Deal. That led swiftly to open assaults under the aegis of the antitrust laws. In Stone's view the trouble began, and finally ended with AT&T's breakup, because of "politics."

Though obviously pejorative, "politics" as Stone uses the term does not imply corruption or personal favoritism. He means specifically that customary standards of efficiency in performance were sacrificed in favor of ideological commitments. Regulators were driven by the populist conviction that "bigness is bad" and that "competition," no matter how loosely defined, is its natural correction. In the 1930s, with the organization of the Federal Communications Commission and the participation of newly activist jurists, these notions led to a bombardment of studies, reports, verbal assaults, and legal charges and decisions directed at AT&T.

The first stage was impressive in duration, awesome in fury, and ended with the impact of a dewdrop. It began with an ambitious federal study of "the concentration of power," undertaken by a committee of fiery New Dealers. It was accompanied by the creation (in 1934) of the FCC, intended to supplement the authority of the regional public utility commissions. In this setting a special investigation was launched into the affairs of the greatest monopoly of them all—AT&T. The study and investigation together occupied seven years, cost several million scarce Depression dollars, and slightly relieved the dreadful unemployment problem of those times by padding the federal payroll. But it unearthed no verifiable deficiencies in AT&T's discharge of its responsibilities nor in its positive accomplishments.

That preliminary finding, coupled with the outbreak of World War II, managed to divert the Justice Department from its quarry until, surprisingly, at war's end the pursuit was renewed. After much further investigation a charge of antitrust law violations was filed in 1949. It took seven years to reach a verdict, bringing the crusade to twenty-two years in toto, and in the end all charges were dismissed with a piddling qualification. AT&T's subsidiary, Western Electric, was required to withdraw from manufacturing articles unrelated to telecommunications, except for "certain products" like the artificial larynx (invented by Bell Laboratories) and those designed for the United States government, most impor-

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tantly for the Department of Defense. No doubt the lawyers and all other government employees involved would have been more productively engaged if they had been hired out as baby-sitters.

The second stage of the government's vendetta began a decade or so later and featured the now admittedly ridiculous decision to allow "cream-skimming." In order to create a nationwide telephonic network available to all, AT&T had developed a rate scale designed especially for that purpose. Charges were fixed lower, *in relation to the high cost per call*, in sparsely populated areas of the country, and in a corresponding way *relatively* higher in densely populated areas, where costs per call were lower. The technique was called "rate-averaging," and was of course approved by regulators as essential to the viability of the system.

Aggressive acquisitors led by MCI (then tiny but ambitious) were quick to sense the opportunities. They requested and obtained permission to hook up to AT&T lines to serve some of the densest and lowest cost sections, like that in the Chicago-St. Louis corridor. There, given the prevailing pattern of rates, MCI could easily undercut AT&T and did. That was cream-skimming.

Despite the unfair advantages, none of the would-be rivals managed to prosper, deficient as they were in technique and experience. Again led by MCI, they therefore renewed pressure on regulators, legislatures, and the courts for more liberal admission to the industry. Cloaked in the glorious robes of freedom and competition, theirs was a cause that was hard to resist. That introduced the third and final stage.

On November 20, 1974, the Anti-Trust Division of the United States government brought a new and broader suit against AT&T in the District of Columbia federal court. The charge was "monopolization, attempt to monopolize, and conspiracy to monopolize." After legal skirmishes that provided busywork for several hundred lawyers, technical experts, and business executives supported by countless clerks employed by both sides, the actual trial did not begin until nearly seven years later. Settlement was ultimately reached and approved by Judge Harold F. Greene on August 11, 1982. Eight years was a long time between charge and consummation, but then depositions and testimony occupied 70,000 transcript pages. It was a vital struggle with a termination that left AT&T with just 23 percent of the assets it had before the trial started. At its height AT&T had been the largest corporation (judged by assets) in the United States. But note that its great work had already been accomplished.

The number of telephones in the nation had exploded from 71,000 in 1876 to 150,000 in 1880 and then to 68 *million* in 1960 and 158 million in 1981. Bell Labs had not only developed a multitude of innovations to extend and improve telephonic technology but also contributed in whole or in part the transistor, talking motion pictures, television, stereophonic sound, and laser technology—only a handful of the 19,500 patents granted by 1982. Meanwhile, the cost to consumers of telephone service had advanced by only a small fraction of the overall rate of inflation.

So of course those past contributions to society are secure. But what of the future? The settlement required AT&T to spin off its regional operating companies and thus remove itself from the local exchange business. It allowed the company to continue its long-distance transmission, but only in competition with MCI, GTE, and many others. It was allowed to retain its Western Electric subsidiary, though competitors would be free to buy telephones and other equipment elsewhere if they wished. The company was also permitted to keep Bell Labs, with the provision that, for a limited period, it

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THE SOUTHERN ESSAYS OF RICHARD M. WEAVER

Foreword by George Core
Edited with Preface by George M. Curtis, III and James J. Thompson, Jr.

Richard M. Weaver (1910-1963) was one of the leading figures in the post World War II development of an intellectual, self-conscious conservatism. Yet following his untimely death his work, for the most part, faded from view, though his most important and widely cited book, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago, 1948), still is in print.

Weaver's appreciation of civility, honor and liberty were rooted in his understanding of Southern history. He discovered in his native land the evolution of a "social bond individualism" very different from the better known "anarchic individualism" of Thoreau. This collection of fourteen of Weaver's essays demonstrates George Core's point that "few critics of the South rival Richard Weaver in comprehensiveness of vision and depth of thought...."

Among the essays included are "Lee the Philosopher" (1948), "Agrarianism in Exile" (1950), "The Tennessee Agrarians" (1952), and "Two Types of Individualism" (1963).

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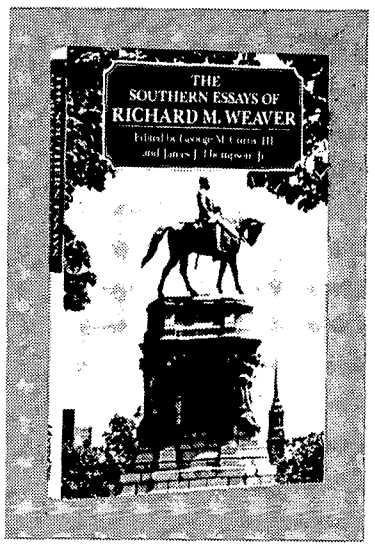

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would agree to render its research and development support to AT&T's competitors.

And the *users* of telephones? If the antitrust crusaders had imagined that their fanatically determined efforts would yield positive results of any kind —much less, say, a dramatic reduction in service charges—the answer must be, not in the slightest. Consumer reports indicate that telephone billings have grown noticeably more complex and service less convenient, and charges have risen at a rate considered markedly greater than normal. The only kind of "competition" observed was in the frequency and decibel level of telephone companies' advertising on TV networks. Was it for this alone, at untold taxpayer expense, that a fifty-year legal struggle had been waged?

Whether the present configuration of the telephone industry conforms with the original dreams of reformers is anyone's guess. It finds AT&T still in the lead in long-distance transmission (though sharing the market with the now formidable MCI, GTE, U.S. Sprint, and others). Local services are handled by a variety of local companies as before, though with a greater mixture in rates, quality of service, and types of regulation. AT&T is now free—as are most of the other firms—to engage in nontelephone activities such as information processing. It was recently encouraged by a multibillion-dollar Air Force order for computers. Meanwhile, the company (as well as its customers) will benefit from the FCC's new approach to regulation, which allows greater rewards for technological gains in productivity. That is one of the areas in which AT&T enjoys special expertise. Once known as the traditional investment vehicle for "widows and orphans," the company may now be exchanging a bit less stability for a bit more excitement.

The last several paragraphs were derived from sources other than *Wrong Number*, since Alan Stone has nothing to say about the aftermath nor about the personalities involved in the long series of disputes and maneuvers. The AT&T story embraces the dreams of geniuses like Alexander Graham Bell, Elisha Gray, and Thomas Edison, and the grand visions of managerial giants like Thomas J. Vail, yet all the characters in Stone's book come across as faceless names. Stone is a seasoned lawyer in the field, and his single-minded preoccupation in this book is with legal details and precedents. Despite its whimsical title and chapter headings ("Hello, Central," "The Bells Are Ringing," "Busy Signals," and so on), *Wrong Number* is designed primarily for scholars.

Whether this was intentional or not, I have no idea. Professionals will no doubt relish its numerous digressions, careful citation of precedents, flashbacks, and sensitive anticipations. But by the same token, general readers, even those above the average in background and determination, will find *Wrong Number* disjointed, devoid of continuity, and often obscure. Its style, in short, will prove a noticeable obstacle in digesting a sequence of events that should have been packed with absorbing interest. □

AT HOME AND ABROAD

V. S. Pritchett/North Point Press/352 pp. $19.95

Jennifer Howard

V. S. Pritchett's status as a literary Methuselah has now lasted as long as the careers of some writers, and so it is expected that any discussion of him should begin with the mention that he was born in 1900 and has been actively writing for most of the intervening time. All the better for him that his work has been as varied as his years are numerous; he has been saluted as a writer of short stories, hailed (albeit less enthusiastically) as a novelist, and, maybe most warmly of all, applauded as an essayist, the last of that near-extinct, nonacademic band called "men of letters."

People who have read Pritchett's literary essays tend to think admiringly of him as a well-read man who follows his instincts about literature instead of some academic or critical rulebook, and whose style is as welcome in its candid craftsmanship as the witty presence of a raconteur at a chancy social event. *At Home and Abroad*, in fourteen essays on locales from the Thames to the Amazon, demonstrates that Pritchett is an adept of the travel piece as well as the literary critique.

This traveling Pritchett dates back to the twenties and forward into the sixties; part of this time was spent as a correspondent for *Holiday* magazine (an early version of Condé Nast's *Traveler*). Travel writing, though in fashion now in a way it hasn't been for years, certainly didn't begin with the current throng of travel magazines trying to make a glossy go of it. Nor are the young gadabouts who write books detailing strange and comic journeys through foreign places (preferably hard to reach or very culturally backward) the first or best practitioners of vagabond writing. This group doesn't include explorers, missionaries, imperialists, or visionary crackpots; it simply consists of people who travel for the heck of it (or because they're paid to) and who go to places that anyone might go to if he had the whim to do so.

Pritchett falls somewhere between the glossies and the gadabouts. The essays in *At Home and Abroad* don't offer restaurant and hotel recommendations, best routes to and from, cautions about local water or weather, or suggestions about provisioning and clothing yourself for the trip. No how-to practicality here. Pritchett abroad doesn't make any show of traveling light (though he may have) or penetrating deep into the outback or into the minds of some undiscovered indigenous tribe. He isn't an explorer or a risk-taker (which isn't to say that he lacks intrepidity). Nor is he a connoisseur or gourmand, out to satisfy his belly around the world (which isn't to say that he travels on a spiritual plane alone).

What Pritchett is, as he himself has suggested, is a frontiersman. In a 1982 essay, another travel writer, Jonathan Raban, quoted Pritchett on Pritchett: "It seems to me that my life as a man and as a writer has been spent on crossing and recrossing frontiers and that is at the heart of any talent I have." Not only has he climbed over the fences separating essayists from novelists from short-story writers, but as an individual he has crossed from one twentieth-century era to another and as a writer has set down the differences between each time bracket and between those who people each one.

His travel essays go by frontiers as well—not necessarily political frontiers, though Pritchett is well aware of the definitions and struggles that those detail. Rather he enjoys those sometimes politically inexpedient points at which one people, one nationality, one way of life ends and another one picks up. Reading *At Home and Abroad* is something like taking a very long plane ride that skims along a continent or world: an overview of brief but lingering scenes.

To sort out these ends and beginnings Pritchett has to do what travel writers of a more "modern" stamp shudder to do: assign and describe what is whisperingly called (and rarely in public) "national character." Worst of all for strict individualists, universal humanists, or those whose parents told them never to judge people on short acquaintance, Pritchett's assessments are not based on long obvious study of each place—though it's reassuring that he can produce a piece of local linguistic or mythological information whenever he feels a need to—but always to back up some point, never to impress.

In an essay on Portugal written in 1956, Pritchett opens with a vignette: a Spaniard shouting in a Portuguese square, to the amusement of patient obliging locals. Having so embodied a difference, he then asks (almost naively), "Why are Spain and Portugal separate?" Instead of answering immediately from his (English) vantage point, he presents an Iberian answer: "It is a question which puzzles Spaniards but the Portuguese not at all. They have (they say) been able 'to imagine themselves as a people,' in spite of their similarities of history." Only in the next paragraph does he give the Pritchett answer: "The westward-looking Portuguese turned by need to the sea and the foreigner; the Spaniard turned against him. That is the huge difference . . ."

Moving eastward to "Europe's Mediterranean Coast," Pritchett in 1966 crossed from southern France over into Italy, ending at Trieste on the Yugoslavian border. To see the Mediterranean, he writes, changes the northerner who comes south. Modernization may have had its effects, but "the sun, the wind, the matchless light, the fruitfulness of the soil, do not change. . . . We are changed by the clarity of the light—and this is important to us who live either in mists or in a northern light so hard that it illuminates nothing—because the Mediterranean light makes us see each thing, each stone, wall, house, tree, separately, so that we accept it—as Mediterraneans do, for itself. We cease to live in the future; we start to live in the present hour." Then, to bring this observation to life, Pritchett describes a Mediterranean buying clothes: ". . . patiently the assistant brings out all the cloth, all the shoes, and is not in the least upset if the customer refuses all. On the contrary, the assistant admires the discrimination. . . . The wish is everything, and for that, patience is indispensable and life is timeless."

Sometimes this assigning of character seems more like accidental assassination, going too far with too little provocation; how easy is it, really, when

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in Marseilles, to "pick out the Spaniards at once by their look of resignation, indifference and blank sadness"? Not all Spaniards in the south of France in 1966 could possibly have been resigned, indifferent, or dejected. But to point this out at all seems almost quibbling, given Pritchett's fine sharp eye for the little events of life that reveal people most honestly. He remembers a Catalan battling to have a window opened in the dining car of a French train but being rebuffed ("The French are great lawyers when it comes to the rules") and then refusing to pay his bill and getting hauled away for his defiance—one story, well chosen (and in *At Home and Abroad* they always are), enables Pritchett to say more about the national personalities involved than pages of detailed geographical description could.

But often Pritchett will light out into a stretch of pure, beautiful description, its layers of color and image and form as pleasurable to climb through as they must have been to lay down. Of going to the Pacific Northwest he writes:

> From San Francisco we flew north: out of the sunny city into the struggle with Nature. Clouds bowled over Oregon, darkened over Washington, the rainstorms began and, below, the forests came tramping down in endless wet armies to meet us. The sea turned gray, and it seemed that it, too, had its forests, for when we looked out over the water, innumerable wooded islands, like schools of whales, were nosing northward with us into dirty weather. The sea turned sallow and then rank ocherish where the Fraser River stained it far beyond its delta with the silt of the Rockies; until, in a sudden vertical mix-up of mountain, cloud, sea, forest and long, straight streets of bungalows and green lawns, we bumped down into Vancouver. From the runway Nature lowered stormily on the city and looked stupendously rock-thighed and high.

Pritchett also has a way of describing some one thing as a subtle way of tapping local roots. In the south of France, it is the mistral, the wind that comes down the Rhone Valley, that catches him:

> It makes the vineyards toss and the trees look mad. It breaks the cypresses, drives the dust, plays intolerably on the nerves and the eyes. Its particular nastiness is that it comes violently out of a clear sky and leaves the sun naked, wild, without heat.
>
> The mistral is blamed for the violence in the south of France. . . . Bodies are thrown into the Rhone. . . . One hears of the driver who shoots a man who keeps him waiting for gasoline. People get "nervous" and quarrel. The waiter announces he is going to shoot his wife. *C'est le mistral.* It was at Saint-Remy that Van Gogh walked into the asylum after cutting off his ear.

These threads of information, tangled together almost comically, become the rope by which Pritchett's impressions of the south of France hold together and latch onto a reader who wasn't there to overhear the overwrought waiter or see the cypresses being cut by the wind. Landscape, people, local tales—and humor: all this in two short paragraphs.

It's strange to read Pritchett on America and see him turning an eye to one's own country ("The Americans in My Mind," 1963). He does offer this disclaimer: "Any foreigner who goes onto the international stage and offers a few quips and asides about the American character ought to state his qualifications. I have only one. Last year, at the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Philadelphia, I was mistaken for the governor of Texas, to whom apologies." Pritchett sees, in America, a nation "kept together by a paradox: a deep emotional sense of freedom," based on the abstraction of the American tradition, created in the eighteenth century, which must reconcile with "the standardization of human beings." His arguments for these pronouncements are several "American prototypes"—bits of characters he found represented in many Americans. Among them: the American Pilgrim ("independent, religious, a ruthless old cuss"), Hiawatha ("the hero who can do anything"), and Sebastian, new world version of the saint ("He is a technician. He has ingeniously invented an invisible apparatus for shooting arrows into himself"). Degrading as these generalities feel (an American is tempted to protest that we can't be as naive and homogeneous as these figures sound), they're no less revealing for being so. And to be fair, Pritchett doesn't exempt his nation from scrutiny; several essays take apart the "island nation" that he lives in, from London on up the Thames.

Given the recent Free Trade Agreement between the United States and its northern neighbor, Pritchett's essay on Canada ("Across the Vast Land," 1964) has a strangely current feel to it. The real Canadian nightmare, he writes, "is not fear of economic swamping by the rich neighbor with whom he has so much in common, but the old fear of disintegration." Pritchett's west-east sweep from Vancouver to Halifax, cutting through the French and Anglo-Saxon hearts of the country, demonstrates this visibly. "Ontario," he suggests, "could be southern England except for one thing: a certain staidness." But in Montreal, "an elderly man came out of a *taverne* near the Place d'Armes, having wined rather well, and he made a fine flourish with his hand and shouted, '*Vive la France!*' at us, with all the *esprit moqueur* of his people."

The essays in *At Home and Abroad* sometimes have the opposite effect, as though Pritchett designed them to freeze a piece of history. This is truest of his mammoth essay on South America, broken up country by country and written in 1956, before debt crises and Amazonian devastation superseded all other South American images. Having made a loop down through all the countries of the continent—via old Spanish Peru, into isolated Chile and back up into melting-pot Brazil—and having seen South America's two overpowering natural features, the Andes and the Amazon, Pritchett takes away with him a feeling of luck. Luck, he says, because to be in South America

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in 1956 was "to see a continent at the moment of its awakening."

Very few writers can say of work specific to one time and place that it holds its currency thirty years or more after its genesis. Any of these essays would be worth reading just for assurance that one genial master of the form still exists. But it's also comforting to be persuaded that the human brain can make sense of the entropic multitude of impressions that form the world; Pritchett characterizes and orders that world without turning it into so many specimens to feel quaint about, as eighties travel writers so often do so annoyingly. Pritchett is as much at home abroad as he is comfortable in England, and complacent and dull in neither place; that is why his venerability belongs to a timeless order of things, and why he and it have endured so long. □

HAROLD MACMILLAN: VOLUME ONE: 1894-1956

Alistair Horne/Viking/537 pp. $24.96

Aram Bakshian, Jr.

Toward the end of his six-and-a-half-year tenure as prime minister, Harold Macmillan did something very out of character: he lost his head. It happened at Madame Tussaud's. The strains of office had graven themselves so deeply into Macmillan's sensitive, finely furrowed face, with its distant, drooping eyes and eternally shrugging brows, that a new, but far older-looking wax head was brought in to replace the one that had topped the prime ministerial effigy since 1957. Macmillan himself had long since shed more than one layer of personal and political skin, to the puzzlement of both critics and supporters.

Three years after his death at 92, he remains something of an enigma, even to as skilled a biographer as Alistair Horne. Again and again, Horne has difficulty in judging the deeper motivations for many of his subject's most important decisions and actions, despite his close collaboration, as official biographer, with Macmillan during the last decade of Macmillan's life.

And what a life it was. Cowed mama's boy of an overbearing Puritan heiress from Spencer, Indiana (father was head of the respectable British publishing house that still bears the family name); bookish religious devotee; courageous, repeatedly wounded World War I hero; canny executive in the family firm; tormented cuckold; Edwardian traditionalist and social reformer; domestic "wet" and external hawk: Harold Macmillan was a bundle of contradictions to most of his contemporaries. His private life was largely a succession of torments stoically endured, his public life a series of unexpected and usually triumphant metamorphoses, culminating in the image of "Super Mac," the unflappable P.M. and sage elder statesman whose imperturbable facade covered a lifelong tendency toward melancholy.

Only occasionally did an observer come close to cracking Macmillan's psychic code, and then the key was usually artistic and intuitive, rather than political. Thus, Evelyn Waugh, in a letter to Ann (Mrs. Ian) Fleming in July 1963, shrewdly, if crankily, suggested that Macmillan,

> like Sir Winston & Lord Hailsham, is ½ American & cannot be judged by English standards. . . . All his friends were killed in the [First World] war. . . . Worst of all he saw the light and rejected it. If he had made his submission to the [Roman Catholic] Church in 1910 when he momentarily decided to, he would not be prime minister nor married to a Cavendish but he would have been a happy and virtuous publisher. . . . I think he has grown a carapace of cynicism to protect a tender conscience.

Unfortunately, the same wounds that strengthened Macmillan personally seem to have left him with a jaded, fatalistic view of his country and the world. By the time he became prime minister, he had ceased to believe in many of the very qualities of his fellow countrymen that have led to a national revival under a less subtle but more resolute Margaret Thatcher. The single-minded bumblebee, oblivious to scientific doubts about her ability to fly, has soared to political heights the blasé old eagle never even attempted.

Experience can deceive as well as inform. The futile slaughter of World War I, the paralysis of the inter-war years, and the drab new egalitarian social order of Britain's welfare state robbed this personally resilient and decent man of the confidence it takes to turn, rather than flow with, the tide.

By the early 1940s, as Macmillan confided to diarist Harold Nicolson, he viewed "extreme Socialism as inevitable, with the Conservatives standing not so much for property, as for private lives." Inevitability perceived fast becomes inevitability achieved; by the time he grasped the tiller in 1957, Macmillan was more of a socialist than a conservative on most domestic issues. Sensible management and a certain standard of deportment became the end-all of his policy agenda, and he succeeded in delivering some short-term gains in living standards without correcting the basic flaws in Britain's over-taxed, under-productive welfare economy. Macmillan's doctrinal errors, compounded by the *mis*management of Labour's Harold Wilson and the personal ineptitude of the Conservatives' Edward Heath (the brief, caretaker terms of Alec Douglas-Home and James Callaghan were mere interludes), left Britain at its lowest ebb in modern history.

On the other hand, all this may have been the necessary prerequisite to radical reform, the nightmare before the awakening. If so, Macmillan's fatalism was justified, though hardly in the way he thought. In his last years, while supporting, like the good non-appeaser he was, Mrs. Thatcher's response to Argentine aggression in the Falklands, he persisted in sniping at the crude but vital side of renascent Tory capitalism at home. Perhaps it irked him to see so much life restored to a body he had given up for dead generations ago.

There is also the question of Macmillan's political—as opposed to his personal—ethics. A man of private piety, probity, and charm, he could be ruthless with those who stood in the way of his career. Since he took the precaution of destroying his diary entries during the Suez crisis, we will never know what was running through Macmillan's mind when he first egged on the unstable Anthony Eden to join with France and Israel in attacking Nasser, only to jump ship when the tacit American support for the venture (which he incorrectly told Eden was a sure thing) turned out to be active opposition. Eden fell, Macmillan became prime minister, and, on this note of slightly tawdry triumph, the first volume of Alistair Horne's absorbing and thorough biography ends.

Horne is at his best when writing about his subject's best points: his physical courage and deep feeling for literature (gravely wounded in no man's land during the Great War, Macmillan browsed through a copy of Aeschylus's *Prometheus*—in the original Greek, naturally—while waiting for the stretcher-bearers); his outstanding diplomatic work during World War II (Macmillan deserves credit for appreciating the importance of de Gaulle and laboring heroically to soothe Le Grand Charles's ego without letting it get out of control); and his genuine piety (he was probably one of the few Anglicans in the twentieth century who prayed daily and meant it).

Subject and biographer are both weaker in those hazy political regions where, in the absence of an overriding philosophy, actions are driven by motives—and open to explanations—that are sometimes less than edifying. Two perceptive journalists who viewed Macmillan at turning points in his career have left us vignettes that may tell us more about his strengths and limits as a politician than Horne does. Writing in 1946, Bruce Lockart saw the strengths of the self-made public man:

> [Macmillan] may yet succeed Winston. He has grown in stature during the war more than anyone. . . . He was always clever, but was shy and diffident, had a clammy handshake and was more like a wet fish than a man. Now he is full of confidence and is not only not afraid to speak but jumps in and speaks brilliantly [in the House of Commons]. He has a better mind than Anthony [Eden, whom Macmillan would later gently dismiss as "basically not an interesting man. . . . He never had a chance to read."]

More than eleven years later, when Macmillan finally did succeed to Number 10, a young British journalist, Henry Fairlie, told Malcolm Muggeridge what high hopes he had for the new P.M.'s "qualities and skills." As Fairlie recently recalled in the pages of the *New Republic*, Muggeridge replied, "I agree, my dear boy, but he's got to power too late. They always get it too late."

Almost always. Rare, indeed, is the leader whose best ideals have not predeceased him on the way up what Disraeli called "the greasy pole" of politics. In this respect, though not in many others, Harold Macmillan was a very common man. □

Aram Bakshian, Jr. writes and broadcasts on politics, history, and the arts in America and England.

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COMMAND OF THE SEAS

John F. Lehman, Jr./Charles Scribner's Sons/464 pp. $21.95

George Szamuely

In the successful 1987 movie *No Way Out* the villain is the defense secretary and the good guy is the director of central intelligence. This reflects current attitudes. Hollywood producers know very well that the Church Committee and then Stansfield Turner have done their work and that any conspiracy of which the CIA was author would not frighten even them, let alone the generally more sensible consumers of their products. But the Pentagon is a different case altogether. Here there is something for everyone. For the none-too-successful businessman there is "waste," for the congressional busybody there is "fraud" and "scandal"—terms freely bandied about yet whose unambiguously ugly connotations are in strange contrast with the extraordinarily difficult and technical issues involved. For those who seem to have devoted their lives to negotiating the end of the Cold War, yet who are ready at any time to accept any terms at all, there is something called "Gorbachev," the very utterance of whose name is supposed to be enough to put to shame anyone who still wants to talk about rockets, trajectories, and the like.

Now there is no doubt that inside a $300-billion-a-year government department we are more than likely to find all kinds of shocking examples of the misuse of public funds. But compared with the performance of other departments the record of the military has not been too bad. The development and deployment of the Stinger missiles led to the greatest reverse the Soviets have suffered in their history. Compare that with a State Department that was happy to sign a treaty agreeing to stop its supply to the mujahedeen in return for no comparable Soviet commitment vis-a-vis its Kabul clients. Compare triumphs like Grenada and the Libyan raid with setbacks like the spies in the Moscow embassy and the massacre of U.S. Marines in Beirut, and ask who bears how much responsibility for each. Was it not the State Department that allowed Soviet personnel to work in the embassy in Moscow? Was it not the State Department that decided that the marines were really in Lebanon to act as a neutral, peace-keeping force and who, as a consequence, should not take any of the usual security precautions of combatants such as having sentries guarding sleeping soldiers with guns chambered and ready? As for the Vietnam war, that was pretty well won by 1968 only to have the fruits of victory thrown away by an alternately complacent and hysterical Washington.

Unlike the makers of *No Way Out*, the antidefense establishment, oddly enough, has picked someone other than the boss of the Pentagon to nourish its new-found fears that the taxpayer is being shortchanged. Just as the Reagan Administration's Central American policy had to have a villain, so the defense buildup also had to have its Elliott Abrams. Not Caspar Weinberger but John Lehman, the Navy secretary from 1981 to 1987, has played the role of the man Washington loves to hate. There are two charges against him.

First, that though President Reagan early on talked of the need to achieve "maritime superiority" as a "necessity . . . to assure access to all oceans of the world," he never intended his Navy secretary to change U.S. strategy on the seas from the limited role of either bringing American power to bear in various exotic parts of the world like Grenada and Lebanon, or in ensuring the safe passage of men and materiel across the Atlantic to the main theater of conflict—Europe, in other words. Instead, the President found himself presiding over a so-called forward strategy, which would entail American submarines and aircraft carriers moving into the Norwegian fjords in the event of a war with the Soviets, and there attacking ports and airfields within reach of the carriers' attack planes. And this strategy, so Lehman's critics argue, makes no sense since any attack on Soviet territory would almost certainly lead Moscow to take at the very least commensurate action against the United States, possibly going as far as responding with nuclear weapons, not to mention the fact that it would be highly unlikely for any aircraft carrier to get within the vicinity of a Soviet base before being destroyed by a Soviet submarine or Backfire bomber.

The second charge is that through introducing competitive tendering into Navy procurement instead of sticking with the practice of having "sole" sources like General Dynamics along with Pentagon bureaucrats deciding how much a particular weapons system "should" cost, Lehman brought into being a particular class of felons—industry consultants who supposedly obtain confidential information from purchasing officials and pass the data on to companies bidding on Pentagon projects—now taking up the time, manpower, and resources of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Lehman's *Command of the Seas* is a formidable attempt to answer his critics. To take the first charge first, because the Soviet Union has been since 1945 the United States's chief adversary it was not surprising that the Navy played a much smaller part in American grand strategy than it did during the Second World War. Possessed neither of the vulnerable coasts like Normandy, nor of Japanese- or German-like dependence on outside sources for food and natural resources, the U.S. could balance huge Soviet preponderance in conventional arms only by one thing: strategic ballistic missiles. The Navy's role was bound to seem subsidiary. The submarines would provide a nuclear second-strike force, and the aircraft carriers and frigates would transport troops and materiel to prolong the fighting and raise the nuclear threshold. In comparison with the Air Force, expected to provide direct tactical support for the forces on the ground, as well as possibly launch a nuclear first-strike, the Navy had become the poor relation of the services.

As the Soviet navy grew during the 1960s and '70s, pundits like Henry Kissinger and his protege John Lehman began to worry that the rundown of American seaborne forces would lead to an inability, in the fashionable parlance of the time, "to project American power overseas," namely in the Third World. The Soviets would intervene in Asia and Africa and direct political developments in their direction while the United States would not be in a position to do anything. Or, alternately, the Soviets would close the Strait of Hormuz or interfere with Western shipping along the Cape route, thereby starving the democracies of important strategic minerals like vanadium, molybdenum, and cobalt. But nothing was done about this under Carter and the rundown of the Navy continued. By 1979 the Soviet fleet had increased to some 1,700 ships while the 950 ships in the U.S. armory in 1969 had now shrunk to a mere 479. Throw in the Soviets' land-based superiority in Europe and it certainly did seem as if the "world correlation of forces" had moved in their direction.

During the 1980 campaign Ronald Reagan committed himself to a 600-

George Szamuely is a former associate editor of the Times Literary Supplement.

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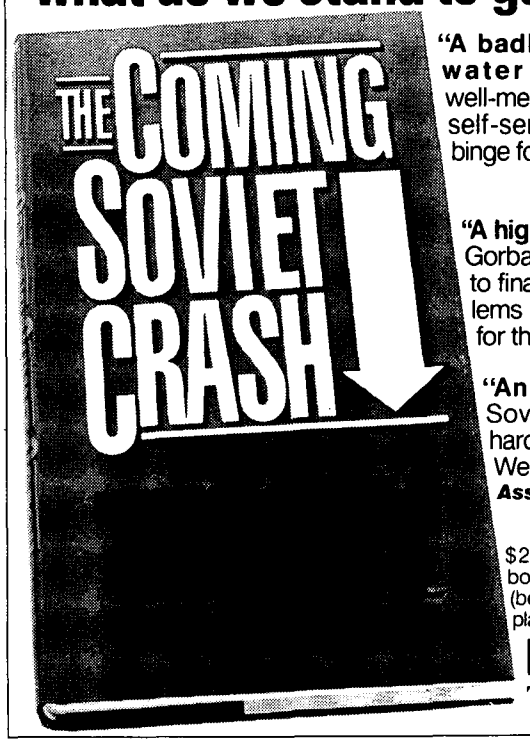

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ship Navy (not surprising considering it was John Lehman who drafted the Republican platform dealing with national security). By 1990, according to most estimates, that plan will have been realized. The surface fleet is built around fifteen aircraft carriers (as against twelve under Jimmy Carter) and four battleships mounted with Tomahawk cruise missiles. The *Ticonderoga*-class cruisers, each with a $300-million Aegis missile system to defend against attack on the carrier fleet, also came on tap during the Lehman years. The number of nuclear attack submarines has grown from sixty-eight to 100, and by 1995 the U.S. should have something like twenty Trident submarines deployed. That is of course barring a START agreement. Reenlistments have jumped from approximately 28 percent in 1981 to more than 50 percent today, reflecting the high morale of the Navy. Lehman's critics acknowledge his successes but attribute them largely to his skills as a bureaucratic fighter for a larger share of the Pentagon budget.

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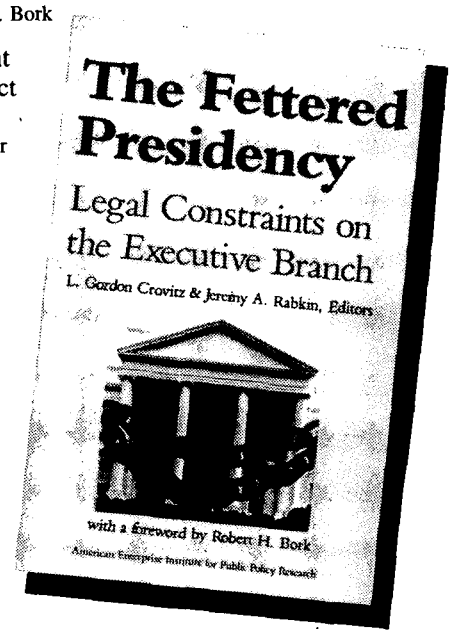
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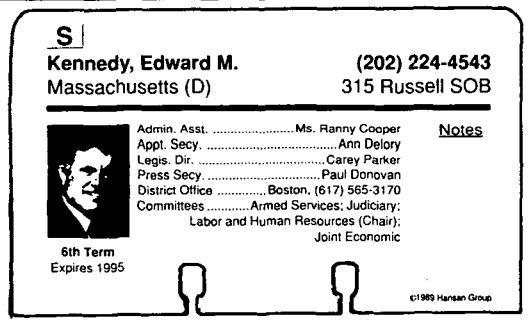
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Lehman's argument is always most convincing when he talks of the importance of maritime superiority as being essential to U.S. security. "We are not breaking new ground," as he puts it, "only recovering what had been foolishly thrown away." And he is right to ridicule those who argued that naval supremacy was pointless since defeating the Soviets on the seas would have no impact on their war effort either in Europe or in the Persian Gulf—depending as they do on internal lines of communication. It might not have much impact on *their* war effort, Lehman writes, but it would certainly have an enormous impact on *ours*:

> The free world is an oceanic coalition. It follows, therefore, that the free world coalition must have unquestioned superiority on the seas if overall strategic parity is to exist—parity at the nuclear level, and inferiority in size of land forces balanced by superiority at sea. . . . Equality applied to the naval balance would mean catastrophe for us because naval parity would bring stalemate. . . . If our convoys could not get through to our European allies, then we would probabiy lose any conflict with the Soviet Union within weeks . . .

Furthermore, Lehman is surely right to point out that the massive Soviet naval buildup of the last couple of decades could not but be offensive in intent. Why is it all right for the Soviets to plan to block the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico choke points for American shipping in the event of war, but reckless and dangerous when we attempt to do the same to them?

On the other hand, neither in his public utterances nor in the book has Lehman made a consistent case on behalf of the strategy of moving into Norwegian waters to destroy Soviet ports and air bases.

First, the necessity for expanding the U.S. naval forces had nothing to do with the supposedly offensive strategy Lehman was espousing. Regaining American naval supremacy was essential to ensure the secure passage of the transatlantic convoys and to be able to thwart the new Soviet interdiction capability in the Gulf of Mexico. Were this no longer possible to achieve, there would be no point in keeping U.S. troops in Western Europe at all—in fact, it would be reckless to do so. Clearly, then, the huge buildup in the nuclear attack submarine forces was absolutely essential.

But the rationale for expanding the aircraft carrier force from twelve to fifteen is less convincing. And this brings us back to the strategy underlying the plan to move into the Norwegian waters in the event of war. Lehman has been equivocal in his justifications. At times he has sounded modest, claiming that failure to do so would be immoral, implying as it does a willingness to abandon the Norwegians to the Russians. In his book, he makes a different point, writing ebulliently that as a result of the change in U.S. strategy, the Soviets now have to spend more time in *their* coastal waters and rather less time in ours: "Major fleet exercises in 1986 departed from previous trends that emphasized far-ranging interdiction operations and instead were staged much closer to home." At other times, however, he has had more ambitious things in mind and has spoken of bottling up the Soviet fleet. "Offense is the only defense available to us," he told *U.S. News & World Report* in 1986. ". . . There is no way to draw a *cordon sanitaire*—a protective shield—against subs and bombers. We've got to see that they have to use their forces to protect vulnerabilities."

But Lehman has not answered critics who say that the expensive carrier battle groups could not survive against the Soviet land-based Backfire bombers, which can fire long-range missiles from well outside the range of the carriers' antiaircraft guns. Moreover, while each aircraft carrier is equipped with about ninety aircraft, only thirty-four of them can be employed safely to attack targets. If for their own protection the carriers are kept some distance from the shore, the number of sorties flown per day by the aircraft would be limited, even allowing for mid-air refueling. (And that's not taking into account the formidable Soviet air defenses.) Lehman contemptuously dismisses the so-called GIUK gap—a line of sea defense stretching from Greenland to Iceland to the United Kingdom intended to prevent a Soviet breakout into the Atlantic—as "a watery Maginot line." But safeguarding that may involve a sounder defense doctrine than risking the gigantic carriers, their accompanying cruisers, destroyers, supply ships, and submarines all for limited gains.

Still, these are disagreements over military strategy, not issues of personal integrity. Unfortunately, in today's Washington, liberals, too intellectually lazy to take on so-called conservative ideologues, prefer to debate personal ethics. Hence Lehman's name is increasingly associated not with having changed U.S. naval strategy, but with being behind the latest Pentagon procurement scandal.

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Now, it may well be that some of Lehman's reforms inadvertently led to the current "crisis." Nonetheless, he was absolutely right to attempt to change the procurement process. In the past the Pentagon would estimate how much a new weapons system would cost before it had even reached the design stage. Needless to say, there would then be enormous cost overruns and no one would be penalized except other items in the defense budget that would have to be cut to accommodate the extra expenses. Companies like General Dynamics had been granted long-term monopolies by the Navy. Lehman managed to persuade Martin Marietta to compete against Lockheed's monopoly on the Trident missile, and Newport News to compete against General Dynamics for the submarines. But as soon as he resigned in February 1987 the two companies dropped out and the monopoly still has not been broken. The bureaucracy's estimating what a fighter plane, say, "should" cost had the inevitable effect of eliminating competition. According to this mindset, as Lehman points out, "A second competitor would only increase the cost because of the duplication of effort and tooling required. Classic economic determinism."

Elsewhere Lehman often speaks of the "socialist system" operating within the Pentagon. And what competition existed was more a "beauty contest among competing designs and selecting a favorite . . . and then awarding a monopoly to one company for decades of production." Lehman claims that through his attempts at bringing in second sources for every appropriate program, the percentage of competition in Navy procurement rose from fifteen in 1980 to seventy-four in 1987. And it was the gigantic logistics bureaucracy contentedly using sole sources for just about everything that was capable of tolerating "prices that a normal human being would reject out of hand," such as the $700-toilet-seat cover. Yet it is today that the Washington crowd hollers about "waste" and "fraud" in the Pentagon. Waste and fraud there may well be, even quite serious incidents of fraud, but how on earth could introducing competition into contracting be exclusively responsible for that? And what is wrong with making individual contractors invest more of their own capital into the development of weapons—as against using Pentagon assets? These are standard practice in every other business.

Whatever the ultimate fate of Lehman's reforms, it was good that there were activists like him in the Reagan Administration. As we are finding out today, there are worse things than having too many ideas. □

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS: MEMOIRS

John Updike/Alfred A. Knopf/257 pp. $18.95

Fred Barnes

John Updike is different from other writers. I got a glimpse of how different one winter afternoon in 1978 when he came to Cambridge to chat for a couple of hours with Nieman Fellows at Harvard. I asked Updike if, as a frequent reviewer of books, he found it unpleasant to criticize writers he knows personally. To my surprise, he said yes—and without paying lip service to artistic integrity, literary values, conscience, and so on. Not being an inhabitant of the New York literary world—he lives north of Boston—Updike said it should be easier for him to take on other writers. But it isn't, he said. Over the years, in trips to New York and to colleges and conferences, he's gotten to know most every literary figure in the country. So his list of reviewable authors is narrow, chiefly the unknown and the dead. His attitude struck me as being awfully kind and genteel. Also extraordinary.

This collection of six autobiographical essays confirms my impression that Updike is more than just a prolific novelist, short-story writer, poet, playwright, and literary critic. (Okay, I admit I've read only four of his novels.) He's a likable, reasonably normal, heterosexual writer who's not at war with mankind, organized religion, America, or our bourgeois culture. Updike says he has a "taste for American life," and not the upper-class or bohemian variety. He sees himself "as a literary spy within average, public-school, supermarket America. It was there that I felt comfortable; it was there that I felt the real news was." The United States, he writes, is "an easy country to love."

Updike is a populist and a patriot. His happy childhood in Shillington, Pennsylvania, as the only child of a father who taught school and a mother who wrote unpublished novels and short stories, helped make him that way. His father submitted without protest to a loyalty oath for state employees. "He had no trouble swearing that he was loyal to the United States," Updike writes in the most riveting essay in the book, an account of his defiant hawkishness on Vietnam.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

"He was loyal, and so was I." Updike is also a Democrat, or at least was. He doesn't mention how he has voted since 1972. (I'd guess he voted for Reagan once, in 1984, and then for Bush.) But he didn't become a Democrat the way the folks he met as an undergraduate at Harvard did. "They, secure in the upper-middle class, were Democrats out of human sympathy and humanitarian largesse, because this was the party that helped the poor. Our family simply had *been* poor, and voted Democrat out of crude self-interest."

About some mundane aspects of middle-class life, Updike is downright lyrical. He is a Boston Red Sox fan. "I had moved to New England, in part, to be closer to Ted Williams," he says. He loves a day with wife and kids at the beach, partly because the sun makes his psoriasis patches fade. At his local North Shore beach, "to be waved past the ticket booth by its pith-helmeted guardians, who knew us by sight and name, and to proceed to the town lot to which our taxes and beach sticker entitled us, and to park, and unload our lunch-basket, our toys, our towels and mats and paperbacks, and to walk down the boardwalk in procession, myself the leader and evident support of so much healthy flesh—what pagan, bourgeois bliss!"

The Vietnam war and its strident, elitist opponents brought out Updike's loyalist streak. His view of the war was fairly simple. When asked by a British editor to spell it out, his salient sentence was this: "I am for our intervention if it does some good—specifically, if it enables the people of South Vietnam to seek their own political fortune." He said "genuine elections" should be held in South Vietnam, noting that it was "absurd to suggest that a village in the grip of guerrillas has freely chosen." If the Communists win a fair election, he wrote, "we should pick up our chips and leave." Though the *New York Times* reported at the time (1966) that he was the only American writer "unequivocally for" the war, Updike says he wasn't either unequivocal or alone. James Michener and Marianne Moore backed the war, and so did W. H. Auden. Updike, by the way, doesn't call himself a hawk, but talks of "not being a dove." That's enough for me.

He seethed at antiwar literary types to the point of lifting his ban on attacking fellow writers, or at least their elitist politics. He calls statements by Norman Mailer and Jules Feiffer "frivolous." Antiwar agitation, "from my perspective, was in large part a snobbish dismissal of [President] Johnson by the Eastern establishment; Cambridge professors and Manhattan lawyers and their guitar-strumming children thought they could run the country and the world better than this lugubrious bohunk from Texas," Updike writes. Another "source of my sense of grievance" was that he hadn't voted "for Abbie Hoffman or Father Daniel Berrigan or Reverend William Sloane Coffin or Jonathan Schell or Lillian Hellman or Joan Baez or Jane Fonda or Jerry Rubin or Dr. Spock or Eugene McCarthy. I had voted for Lyndon Johnson, and thus had earned my American right not to make a political decision for another four years." He voted for Hubert Humphrey in 1968, and, implausibly, for George McGovern in 1972.

The antiwar crowd distorted pacifism. "Pacifism is a luxury a generous country can allow a small minority of its members, but the pacifism invoked in the anti-Vietnam protest was hypocritical and spurious," he says. "Under the banner of a peace movement, rather, war was being waged by a privileged few upon the administration and the American majority that had elected it."

Updike's most appealing trait—political trait—is his unequivocal anti-Communism. If this isn't unusual in an Eastern literary figure, I don't know what is. "I would rather live under Diem (or Ky, or Thieu) than under Ho Chi Minh and his enforcers, and assumed that most South Vietnamese would," he writes. "Those who would not, let them move north. But the foot traffic, one could not help noticing . . . was south, or west, away from Communism." A trip to the Soviet Union and another to Eastern Europe gave Updike "a hardened antipathy to Communism." There was even a time when playwright Arthur Miller understood, Updike says. After they'd entertained visiting Soviet writers in New York and Connecticut, "Miller looked at me and said sighingly, 'Jesus, don't they make you glad you're an American?' " Says Updike: "I *was* glad." □

Next Month (for sure) Whittaker Chambers, Journalist

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LIFE SKETCHES

John Hersey/Alfred A. Knopf/352 pp. $19.95

Francis X. Rocca

Although he is primarily a novelist, the versatile and inconsistent John Hersey is most famous for his nonfiction *Hiroshima* (1946), in which he reconstructs the lives of six survivors in the days after the detonation of the first atomic bomb. The book, written twenty years before *In Cold Blood*, combines novelistic techniques and the fruits of thorough reportage in a narrative that does not pause, except for background; never for ponderous reflection on the Meaning of It All.

Not surprisingly, stories of survival, told in precise and unassuming prose, are among the most compelling in *Life Sketches*, a collection of eighteen biographical essays, written between 1944 and 1988. The escape from a Nazi deathcamp by the ingenious and intrepid Bernard Weintraub makes for the best story of this type in the book, because Hersey gracefully and economically weaves the protagonist's background into the action. Significantly, it is not one of the eight *New Yorker* articles included in this collection, all of which could use tightening—the natural result of editorial indulgence and dollar-a-word largesse.

As at that magazine (to whose venerable former editor, William Shawn, this book is dedicated), here the guiding sensibility is liberalism, yet Hersey is not utterly predictable. He turns the case study of a gifted sixth-grader into an eloquent and vehement attack on "misplaced egalitarianism" in the public schools. Expressing skepticism about the un-Jeffersonian notion that "all human beings [are] infinitely educable," he champions a policy of "equality of opportunity" in order to sort out the most talented. He chides the Ivy Leaguers, circa 1968, who vulgarized James Agee's rebellious ideas:

> Half deafened by rock and roll, they loved his praise of loud music, not noticing that he wrote only of amplifying Beethoven and Schubert. They were delighted by his wondering whether tenant farmers, who were "among the only 'honest' and 'beautiful' users of the language," should be forced to become literate by semi-literate teachers—apparently not noticing that he also quoted Kafka, Blake, Celine.

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Hersey is of a more responsible generation. He tells, in timely contrast to Hollywood's sensationalist distortions, the semitriumphant tale of a black Mississippi farmer's patient, nonviolent struggle to get the vote in 1964. Unfortunately, the author also shows his age by reciting vintage shibboleths. There are the usual slurs on the "half-mad [Whittaker] Chambers, whose eyes were hooded with paranoia," and a sneer at "Nixonism." He dismisses Henry Luce's China policy as a terrible idiosyncrasy. There is no argument on its merits, as if it were self-evident that Mao was preferable to Chiang.

Happily unopinionative are the profiles, rendered after a few hours of observation, of a couple of prominent figures. Bernard Baruch, self-made millionaire financier, self-styled Wise Man, and an inveterate show-off, emerges as a sympathetic and impressive character—not least because of his masterful nonstop storytelling. Hersey enhances the long quotations with colorful descriptions of Baruch in his favorite setting, the Saratoga racetrack. This is an act of virtuosity and modesty, since Baruch appears to tell his own story, without any help from Hersey.

It is less of a pleasure to read about a morning walk and swim with Harry Truman. Unlike Baruch, whose blarney is ironical, Truman appears to have had no sense of humor about himself. He boasts of his diligence, probity, refusal to exploit the privileges of office, and lack of desire for publicity. More persuasively, with remarks on Plutarch and Tennyson, Truman demonstrates that his brand of homespun erudition was the genuine article, if hardly Lincolnesque in stature. By the standards of the soundbite age, Truman was a philosopher king. Notwithstanding the pre-Sam Donaldson custom of deference to the President, it is curious that Hersey—the conscience of Hiroshima—does not bring up Truman's decision to drop the Bomb.

Because he is a reporter, Hersey is ridiculed by Truman for his presumed laziness. Otherwise, the interviewer remains invisible. It is the same reserve that lends *Hiroshima* its dignity and powerful starkness. Unlike some of his successors in so-called Literary Journalism, such as Joan Didion, Hersey has never indulged in solipsism.

On the contrary, we find him struggling with the problem of the intrusive interviewer when he talks to the children of Holocaust survivors living in Israel. He tries transcribing their remarks, as in a play, with italicized stage directions. Another passage is composed of terse responses, leaving the reader to infer all the questions. These interviews hold one's attention, revealing unsuspected conflicts between the generations, as well as the complexity (usually ignored abroad) of Israeli political culture—divided on even the life-and-death issues.

The touches of memoir in this book are rare and vivid. A reminiscence of his eccentric headmaster, written for the Hotchkiss alumni bulletin, is canny and affectionate. Sinclair Lewis, whom Hersey served as a secretary for the summer of 1937, he portrays with compassion. The portrait of Luce, another old boss, is redeemed by pithy evocation: "Abstractions lit up his face, as if in a dazzling *son et lumiere* at the Sphinx."

So it is disappointing that Hersey is least interesting on the subject of his friends. He gives a tedious account of publisher Alfred A. Knopf's preoccupation with the national parks; a cut-and-paste of recollections by Knopf's cronies of their interminable hikes together. This enormous backslap was originally one chapter in a privately printed sixtieth birthday present. One cringes to think of the obsequies performed by other prominent writers.

Flattery of a more offensive sort is lavished on the late Lillian Hellman, Hersey's Martha's Vineyard neighbor. He chortles lewdly, as at a celebrity roast: ". . . she has always wanted to go to bed with an orangutan." He enthuses: "She has experienced so much! She has had an abortion"—and so on, a litany of achievements by a "libertine spirit." She is a "moral force," this apologist for Stalin, and a paragon of "decency." Her cunning evasions before HUAC are a testament of conscientiousness.

What was perhaps Hellman's worst sin—fabricating her assistance to a mysterious "Julia" in the anti-Nazi Austrian underground—was not known in 1976, when this testimonial was delivered at an award ceremony. But by reprinting this now, Hersey is not just being loyal to a friend's memory. He is doing his part to obliterate, with immoderate and inapt praise of its perpetrator, the exposure of a colossal hoax. Because of Hersey's prestige, this short encomium is a significant boost for what Paul Johnson has called "the Lillian Hellman myth industry."

Hersey himself has been exposed in a breach of integrity, though less grave than Hellman's. On July 18 of last year, the *New Yorker* published a long piece of his about his old Time, Inc. colleague, James Agee. A few days later Agee's biographer, Laurence Bergreen, pointed out "about 20 specific examples of copyright infringement" in the article. These were not the sort of absent-minded transpositions that all writers perpetrate occasionally. Hersey had appropriated quotes and constructions of this order: where Bergreen had "stories on topics as diverse as butter, cockfights, and quinine," Hersey put "articles on butter, cockfights, and quinine." The appearance of longer passages, elaborately rearranged, was even more startling. The matter was resolved without litigation and "plagiarism" was one word neither party used. Hersey made a grudging half-apology.

That Agee essay is now part of *Life Sketches*. Hersey has duly fixed the offending passages, and he has added a list of nine sources, including Bergreen's book—but he cannot have been happy about it. The galley proofs contain this new sentence:

> Laurence Bergreen's *James Agee: A Life* has the flaw of indiscriminately presenting details from the fictions as if they were facts; the book also contains many errors on matters not derived from Agee's writings.

In the finished bound book, this has been replaced with a milder dismissal. At least vindictiveness is restrained by dignity; and the spirit of William Shawn prevails somewhat over that of Lillian Hellman. □

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THE POVERTY OF COMMUNISM

Nick Eberstadt/Transaction Books/317 pp. $19.95

Cathy Young

During the Reagan-Gorbachev summit of December 1987, a gentleman with a Manhattan address straight out of Tom Wolfe took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* calling for better mutual understanding, which opened thus: "The major difference in the ideologies of the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union is that America represents freedom, while the Soviet Union espouses freedom from poverty."

Far from being a mere eccentricity of an idealistic millionaire, the old fellow's expression was merely what has long been the conventional wisdom among academics, journalists, and assorted progressives: Yes, Communism may deprive people of liberty, but at least it meets their basic material needs, such as food and housing and medical care. Now, in his new book, *The Poverty of Communism*, Nick Eberstadt, a scholar at the Harvard University Center for Population Studies and at the American Enterprise Institute, finally takes aim at the myth of Marxist-Leninist regimes' superior performance in the arena of "economic rights."

The book is a collection of previously published essays written between 1981 and 1987, and since they have not been updated, Eberstadt's study sometimes fails to catch up with current developments—which, however, fully corroborate his essential thesis. Glasnost-era disclosures in the Soviet press have painted a grim picture of squalor, complete with hunger and homelessness. The Soviets now admit that at least one-fifth of the population lives below the officially defined "subsistence level." (A prominent Soviet sociologist has estimated the figure at a staggering 40 percent.) In Hungary—regarded as a paragon of wealth throughout the Eastern bloc—about a quarter of citizens are reported to be living in poverty.

Eberstadt's devastating study of the Soviet Union's health crisis, based on life expectancy and infant mortality statistics, originally appeared in 1981, and was blasted by some as "Cold War propaganda"; by 1988, high-ranking Soviet officials were openly saying that about one-third of the population is not getting adequate medical care. "Measured by the health of its people," Eberstadt states flatly, "the Soviet Union is no longer a developed nation." In life expectancy and child mortality, it ranks close to Panama, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, and other Third World countries—which, moreover, "are moving up, while the Soviet Union is moving down." Nor do the less developed Soviet republics of Central Asia account for these startling statistics.

Eberstadt theorizes that worsening Soviet health conditions may have something to do with the Russian national character and cultural values that glorify passive endurance in the face of suffering. Such gratuitous speculation seems out of place in a serious study. Moreover, the author's own analysis indicates that the Europeanized Baltic republics of the USSR and many East European countries, which are not populated by long-suffering Russians, are experiencing the same problems.

The author is on much firmer ground with less metaphysical explanations: alcoholism (plus alcohol-related accidents), rampant air and water pollution, low health and safety standards in the workplace, contaminated infant formula. Finally, there is Soviet socialized medicine, with numerous but low-paid and frequently underqualified doctors, stone-age equipment, scarce medicines—and a declining share of the national budget (from 6.5 percent in the mid-1960s to about five percent in the mid-1970s). "The Soviet Union may be the only advanced society to allocate progressively more modest proportions of its output to maintaining the health of its people," Eberstadt comments wryly.

In the mythology of Marxist-Leninist victories over poverty, the story of Cuba under Fidel Castro has been perhaps the biggest hoax of all. Eberstadt notes that even some harsh critics of Cuba's human rights violations have paid homage to its "model progress against disease and ignorance." He takes on the prevalent misconceptions about prerevolutionary Cuba, which, whatever one may say of Battista's rule, was one of the healthiest and best-educated nations in the region. (Since the Revolution, its per capita income has fallen from third to fifteenth place in Latin America.)

Using statistical tables, Eberstadt scrutinizes the Cuban Revolution's much-touted accomplishments in health and literacy. He argues persuasively, on the basis of strange discrepancies in official Cuban data—such as a marked drop in child mortality and, simultaneously, a rise in the diseases likely to cause it—that the Castro regime has been engaging in some statistical hanky-panky. These suspicions are shared by a number of Western demographers. Illiteracy in Cuba may be undercounted as well.

The real shocker is that, even according to probably skewed official statistics, improvements in health and education on "the Isle of Liberty" have been matched or surpassed by many of its non-Communist neighbors, such as Costa Rica, Panama, and Chile *under Pinochet*. If alternative estimates are accurate, then "the revolutionary Cuban experience would represent not the most rapid, but instead virtually the slowest measured rate of progress against infant mortality in Latin America and the Caribbean."

Eberstadt goes on to compare health, nutrition, and literacy data from Communist and non-Communist less developed countries. Again, Marxism-Leninism repeatedly comes up short, even in improving the status of women. And what of the liberals' great sacred cow of "equitable" distribution of wealth? Eberstadt sensibly suggests that inequality of class should be measured not only by income differentiation but also by social mobility—in other words, "the degree to which a person can rise or fall in society according to his own actions and efforts."

However, Eberstadt is no laissez-faire dogmatist. His focus is not so much on the virtues of free markets as on the vices of Communist governments. It is not, he argues, the degree of a government's economic intervention that matters most, but the ideology of that government. Indeed, he sometimes seems a bit too readily accepting of non-Communist statism: "It has become not just accepted, but expected, that governments will protect their citizens against untoward results of 'normal' market behavior and preempt market decisions in the name of the greater national good. . . . Increasingly, it is governments rather than markets which take the lead in shaping economic life." One might retort that governments best succeed in this task by leaving it to the markets—though Eberstadt does produce some surprising evidence of a substantial government role in the economies of some Third World countries, mostly Asian, that are commonly viewed as capitalist successes.

Other chapters include an excellent essay on the cost to the Soviet Union of maintaining its empire, which provides a useful context for the drop in health expenditures. Eberstadt adds some prescriptions for Western action

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Cathy Young is the author of Growing Up In Moscow, *published in May by Ticknor & Fields.*

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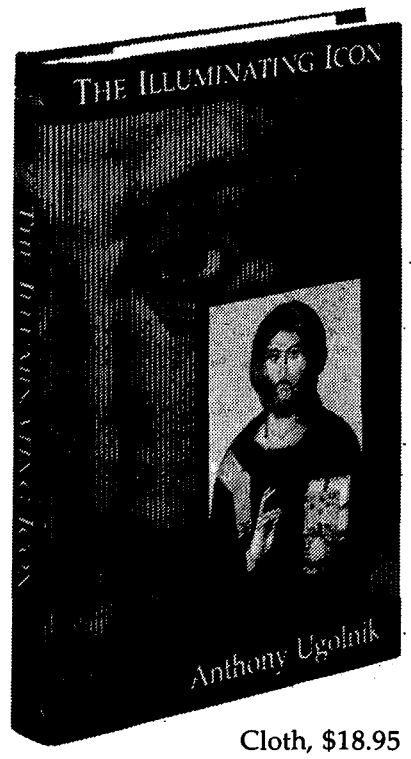

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that could help "Finlandize" Eastern Europe (Finlandization, for once, representing progress). His polemic against eminent Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer on the nature of the modern Soviet state and on Western policies toward the USSR is well argued if rather loosely connected to the subject of this volume.

The Poverty of Communism is an informative, intelligent, well-written work. Masterful statistical analysis is interspersed with enough anecdotal evidence to make it quite readable, even lively (though one still wishes Eberstadt had mixed his sociology with more journalism to give the reader a real sense of daily life and daily hardships in Communist societies).

Unfortunately, the book promises more than it delivers, and too many relevant stones are left unturned. Health and education are virtually the only indicators he uses to measure progress against material deprivation. Eberstadt deals briefly with nutrition but fails to follow up on some tantalizing questions raised by his own data. Thus he repeats, without challenge, the Soviet claim that "a monotonous but ample diet" is ensured to all; yet elsewhere in the book, he notes that the startling rate of malnutrition-related diseases such as rickets among Soviet children suggests the existence of hunger.

Housing is omitted from the discussion except for a reference to "a slow but steady improvement of housing" in the Soviet Union. This may be true; but about one-sixth of the population still lives in apartments shared with unrelated families, and many more are lodged in dormitories that rival New York's infamous homeless shelters. (Even in relatively prosperous Leningrad, recent data show, more than a quarter of the citizens have less space than the minimum required under state sanitary norms.) And while Eberstadt devotes some attention to Eastern Europe, he says little about Rumania. Yet one could hardly wish for a better illustration of the book's title, where heat and electricity are being rationed and desperate crowds line up for potatoes while an intransigent despot haughtily declines offers of foreign aid.

The complete story of the poverty of Communism, then, remains to be written. However, it is only fair to say that whoever writes it will be greatly indebted to Nick Eberstadt for his careful and thoughtful scholarship, a vital contribution to the field. Come to think of it, even the incomplete story Eberstadt has given us should be enough to lay to rest the notion that Marxism-Leninism can be beneficial to the poor. □

RED TEARS: WAR FAMINE AND REVOLUTION IN ETHIOPIA

Dawit Wolde Giorgis/Red Sea Press (Trenton, NJ)/375 pp. $29.95

Arch Puddington

In a book that deserves a much wider hearing than it so far has received, Dawit Wolde Giorgis reminds us that if totalitarianism has been the nightmare of the twentieth century, Third World totalitarianism, especially its Communist variants, has been the special curse of the past twenty years.

Dawit was uniquely positioned to assess Communism's impact on his own society, Ethiopia. A young, educated, progressive-minded military officer, he was an early and avid supporter of the armed forces group that overthrew Haile Selassie in 1974. He subsequently rose to various high posts within the revolutionary government, ultimately serving as director of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), the agency charged with organizing famine relief during the catastrophic drought of 1984-85. As both government official and member of the revolutionary party's central committee, Dawit is the most highly placed member of the Ethiopian Communist government to have defected to the West.

He has now written an astonishing account of one of the world's great tyrannies, a Stalinist-inspired regime that has sought a massive, overnight transformation of one of Africa's most backward societies. Although Ethiopia has never experienced long-term colonial rule, it was, by the 1970s, a society ripe for change. The old emperor, once revered for his resistance to Mussolini's imperial designs, had grown oblivious to the grinding poverty of his people, who labored under a feudal system that deprived them of land ownership.

Opposition centered among younger military officers and students, many of them Western-educated and strongly influenced by anti-imperialist and Marxist ideologies. While the military men responsible for the initial coup were not committed to any particular political philosophy, under the insistent urgings of the students they were inevitably drawn to various socialist models—Chinese, Yugoslav, "African."

The lurch toward an overtly pro-Soviet stance followed the rise of Mengistu Haile Mariam as supreme revolutionary leader. Although not prominent among the soldiers who engineered the coup, Mengistu quickly gained the loyalty of the more politicized soldiers and students, including Dawit, who saw Mengistu as the only military man with the "charisma, energy, or inclination to fight for the changes we thought were necessary." What made Mengistu stand out in the early, chaotic, postmonarchy days was his calmness, lack of arrogance, and resoluteness. This last trait was crucial, as Mengistu eliminated methodically rivals within the military and among the once-worshipful students as well. Dawit records a series of gruesome incidents in which Mengistu, flanked by loyal troops, massacred the rival of the moment and his supporters. On one notable occasion, Mengistu and his followers walked out of a meeting of the military leadership, only to return with security guards who promptly executed the seven remaining anti-Mengistu men.

As Mengistu's appetite for power grew, so did his pro-Soviet inclinations. The Soviets provided him with desperately needed military aid, and he was also impressed by their ideology, particularly its more infamous dimensions: its ruthlessness and inflexibility toward putative enemies, its time-proven techniques of internal control, and its cults of personality. A visit to North Korea made a powerful impression, and he subsequently borrowed heavily from the techniques of Kim Il Sung. Mengistu soon began comparing Ethiopia's revolution to the Bolshevik original: informed that the nascent Soviet state had been surrounded by fourteen hostile powers, he somehow discovered that embattled Ethiopia was threatened by precisely the same number.

Mengistu's admiration for Soviet achievements took a more sinister turn when he finally got around to dealing with the agricultural problem. Like Stalin, Mengistu first encouraged the famine through state control of agriculture and then, after the hostile peasants had been beaten down by hunger, exploited the tragedy to advance collectivization.

Initially, Mengistu underestimated the famine's larger usefulness to his collectivization drive and in fact treated it as a nuisance that threatened to detract from the regime's agenda. When Dawit, as chief of famine relief, informed his leader that major problems were in the offing, Mengistu told him not to work too diligently to alleviate the mounting misery in the countryside:

> Your primary responsibility is to work toward our political objectives. Don't let these petty human problems that always exist in transition periods consume you. There was famine in Ethiopia for years before we took power—it was the way nature kept the balance.

Mengistu's greatest worry was that revelations of famine would spoil the gala celebration planned for the revolution's tenth anniversary in September 1984. Dignitaries from the Communist powers and the "nonaligned" movement were expected to be on hand, and Mengistu had chosen the occasion to officially establish a ruling Communist party. Having invested considerable energy and money (much of it contributed by foreign governments) toward this event—he even imported a delegation of North Koreans to help plan the rallies and pageantry—Mengistu was determined that his country, or at least its capital city, present an image of order and neatness.

As a first step, he ordered all undesirables—beggars, prostitutes, street people—removed from Addis Ababa and placed in concentration camps outside the city. As conditions in the countryside worsened, however, more extreme measures were needed to prevent starving peasants from ruining the spectacle. Eventually, the police were ordered to form a human chain around the capital to keep anyone from entering in search of food. In the end, the tactic worked; foreign guests marveled at how clean and prosperous Addis Ababa appeared, especially in contrast to other Third World capitals, where public evidence of mass poverty was the norm.

As the famine grew more acute by the day, Mengistu's attitude remained unchanged. While Westerners were now expressing remorse for not responding to Ethiopia's plight more expeditiously, Ethiopia's leader was devising ways to prevent the outside world from learning the full extent of the crisis. Among these was a massive effort to deceive foreign notables lured to the Ethiopian countryside by televised images of dying children. When Harry Belafonte and a delegation from USA for Africa visited a relief site: →

Arch Puddington works for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in New York. His book, Failed Utopias: Methods of Coercion in Communist Regimes, *was published by ICS Press earlier this year.*

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They saw only what was programmed by party officials, who had carefully prepared places for foreign viewing and secretly assigned people they could talk to. Earlier, when foreigners would come and talk to peasants about conditions, government-smart journalists recorded the entire conversations and had them translated outside Ethiopia. We countered this move by having cadres disguised as peasants at the resettlement sites. When foreigners arrived to ask questions, they could tape anything they liked. They found the "peasants" cheerful, willing, and in excellent health. Naive foreigners left wondering at the intelligence of the peasantry and their intense commitment to the revolution.

Such cynicism aside, it soon dawned on Mengistu that the famine opened up unprecedented opportunities for the expansion of state power, hitherto largely limited to the major cities, by removing the chief obstacle to collectivization—a robust peasantry.

Like Stalin in his dealings with the Ukrainian countryside, Mengistu understood that hunger was a potent weapon in the drive for socialism. Thus at the famine's height, Mengistu announced a massive resettlement program that would shift millions of peasants from the "overpopulated" northern regions to less crowded and relatively famine-free central and southern sections. To foreign audiences, resettlement was presented as a humanitarian policy designed to minimize the impact of future drought. To other members of the leadership, including Dawit, Mengistu candidly outlined the real motives: accelerating collectivization, splitting up potentially hostile tribal groups, providing a dumping ground for political dissidents and the urban *lumpenproletariat*, and thinning out the population of rebel areas.

In its execution, resettlement was a nightmare, ranking among the worst state-engineered atrocities of the recent past. Troops would arrive at a settlement, or, as was sometimes the case, a relief center, indiscriminately round up those peasants unable to escape, and place them in concentration camps. From the camps they were packed into buses or huge Soviet Antonov cargo planes, which would transport them to the resettlement sites. Many died in transit; others succumbed to diseases and the generally primitive conditions in the resettlement areas. More common was family separation, which Dawit estimates affected hundreds of thousands of peasants randomly taken by soldiers to fill resettlement quotas.

It goes without saying that this whole obscene enterprise was publicized as a great step forward for the Ethiopian nation. Dawit describes a particularly nauseating incident in which Legesse Asfaw, one of Mengistu's more villainous henchmen, delivered a pep talk to a group of peasants about to embark for their new homes:

> The weak, the aged, the dying, the children—all were forced to listen. Legesse lectured these emaciated skeletons about Marxism and Leninism, about the establishment of the Party, and about the achievements of the Revolution. . . . His cadres scattered among the crowd would tell the people to applaud at certain points. The clapping was faint and sickly as the peasants tried to obey the cadres; some could barely move their hands. At the end of each speech Legesse would shout "Down with Imperialism! Down with Capitalism! We shall overcome nature! We shall go where the government tells us to go! Long live Mengistu!" At every slogan, people were expected to raise their fists in the power salute. It was a scene all of us were used to in other contexts, but here in the shelters it was a horrible spectacle.

Mengistu's ardent embrace of the Soviet system was not motivated solely by ideological conviction; he desperately needed Soviet bloc military assistance to prevent the Ethiopian nation's dismemberment by the various secessionist movements. Dawit himself credits Soviet arms, advisers, and Cuban troops as crucial to Ethiopia's defeat of Somalia in their 1977 war, while noting that the Soviets allocated their military assistance to ensure long-term Ethiopian dependence.

As for the Soviet bloc's response to Ethiopia's domestic crises, Dawit describes an attitude of determined indifference. Moscow and its allies steadfastly declined to contribute more than a pittance to famine relief—going so far as to refuse to attend meetings at which Western donors were present—and only began supplying food and transport assistance when their argument that famine relief was the West's responsibility became the object of world scorn. Even then, the Soviets' reputation in Ethiopia suffered because of the behavior of their relief personnel. Dawit reports that Soviet relief workers were "lazy and completely unmotivated"; although Moscow sent twelve cargo planes and twenty-four helicopters, they were unable to move as much food as the Royal Air Force's two cargo craft. Even worse, Soviet military personnel and truck drivers routinely stole food and other material slated for famine relief—profoundly embarrassing for a regime that was constantly praising the good works of the USSR.

Mikhail Gorbachev has grown fond of issuing pronouncements about man's common destiny and the universality of humanitarian values. There would be no more convincing way to demonstrate his commitment to these lofty ideals than to pledge never to help impose Communism on another luckless people and, beyond that, to disengage from those regimes, such as the one that holds sway in Ethopia, which not only preside over, but actually take pride in a system that is inevitably leading their societies to economic and moral ruin. □

CORRESPONDENCE
(continued from page 7)

Don't Be Cruel

I am a thoroughgoing conservative. I adore *TAS* and agree with its positions. I have sent copies to friends; I have paid for trial subscriptions for students; I have contributed cash to your cause.

But I am deeply offended by your making fun of people who protest against cruelty to animals. You yourselves may not care about animal suffering, but ridiculing those who do seems callous and uncalled for. Please realize, concern for the well-being of animals is not confined to the political left. There are conservatives who believe that animals are not on earth to be brutalized by humans. Why alienate them? I for one can no longer support you if you continue to flaunt your insensitivity.

—Mary Pfeiffer
Oakhurst, California

Our Other Path

I was much amused to find that Tom Bethell and Irwin M. Stelzer found the information in Hernando de Soto's book *The Other Path* new and worthy of commentary in your journal (*TAS*, April 1989). My mother's father, Jonathon Herbert Osborne, had told me exactly the same things about Latin American economies repeatedly when I was between ten and fourteen years about forty-two years ago. He over and over again illustrated the truth of what he had to say from things culled from the *National Geographic* and other contemporary journals plus events closer to home and I have never forgotten it. It is much the same reason why states like Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico have never been able to take full advantage of the Sun Belt revolution and why so many of their more enterprising youth have to leave to find anything like a decent economic situation. It is also the reason why the United States as a whole, under the ruinous influence of a House of Representatives more permanent in its membership than the British House of Lords or the Soviet Politburo and a Senate that has returned to the control of the "Democratic" party, is rapidly legislating the United States into the same position. . . .

The spoils system in American politics, which in spite of the rise of the Civil Service System is still firmly entrenched in most cities, counties, and states (probably Washington, as well) and growing stronger due to the demand to populate all levels of any bureaucracy with the necessary number of women and minorities, has led to the establishment of the mercantilist mentality. And unfortunately, Ralph Nader is its prophet! After all, you just can't have people starting businesses without adult supervision, making things and providing necessary and even frivolous services for profit. . . .

Unfortunately, the set of rules and the process by which they were made which so fascinated Mr. De Soto and which so few Americans can now describe, is now going (just as Mr. Jefferson feared) by the board. The Supreme Court, as Woodward points out and real conservatives have always known, legislates; Congress (having forfeited its own) is appropriating the power and function of the executive branch; and the President is prating about a "kinder, gentler America" while federal judges are setting employment rules in cities like San Francisco that essentially amount to "white males need not apply." And while responsible journals, such as your own, have for some time been busy pointing out that the Emperor has no clothes, the debauchees in the media seem to like it that way. They, too, know something is wrong, but old truths are simply too declasse. After all, we too are now an elite that need not dirty our hands or our minds with honest work. It's too, too bad. Or is it?

—Lee Poteet
Petaluma, California

EDITORIALS
(continued from page 9)

Would they argue that universities are freer, more scholarly, more intellectually alive? And what about the Communist world? Is the wisdom of Marx and Lenin and Mao still cherished?

The other night these questions did not trouble the happy defenders of the New Left. Yes, they had made mistakes; but thanks to their efforts America is a better place. For every tragic excess they had an alibi; and, somewhat surprisingly, they maintained the old manic confidence that the future must be theirs, not George Bush's or Margaret Thatcher's or any of the other figures of the present. Somehow America is going to return to 1969, though not all the nuts of that era will be around. Hours before the debate it was divulged that Abbie Hoffman had committed suicide by downing some 150 pills in his home, a converted turkey coop. "He felt," a friend reported, "bypassed by history." □

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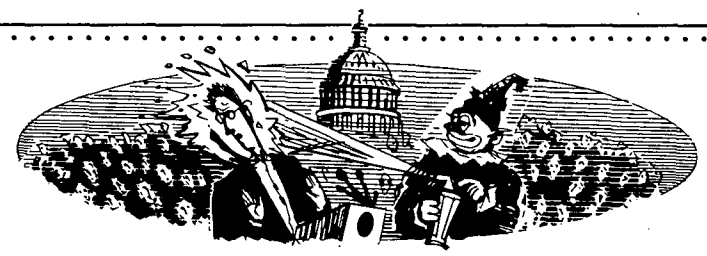

CHOICE CUTS

It has become virtually impossible these days to make a Hollywood starlet shut up. Sincere, honorable persons of good faith, who believe with every fiber of their being that Hollywood actresses should be summarily removed from public discourse, have seen the right to silence bimbos steadily eroded by activist courts careening under the influence of the liberal media. There is, most prominently, what we might call the First Amendment Problem. In the early sixties, the now-notorious Warren Court discovered, through typically tortuous reasoning, an "excretion from the penumbra" of the Constitution's free speech clause allowing the Court to extend the right of unfettered expression of ideas even to people who have never had an idea: even, in other words, to overpaid, heavily mascara'd blondes who perform on television in nightgowns. Almost immediately after the ruling was handed down, Jayne Mansfield endorsed George Murphy in his bid for a Senate seat, and Mamie van Doren started bitching about Quemoy and Matsu. Frank introduced Marilyn to JFK. From there, argue the starlets' opponents, it was but a short slide down the slippery slope to Hanoi Jane.

Now we have the Hollywood Women's Political Committee. Since its founding in 1984, the Committee has slowly insinuated itself into the life of Washington. It obtrudes at that point in the cultural matrix where the interests of show business and politics most conspicuously intersect: celebrity and money. Wherever leggy TV stars slink and sashay—at a cocktail party in a Beverly Hills bistro or at a rubber-chicken dinner in the ballroom of a Washington hotel—there's bound to be money, which means that, sooner or later, politicians will show up too. The Committee's first function was a Mondale/Ferraro campaign dinner in August 1984, which hauled in $1 million. In 1986, during three humid hours around Barbra Streisand's swimming pool, it raised $1.5 million for Democratic Senate candidates. More recently, the HWPC has taken to bestowing the "Barbara Jordan Award for Political Courage and Commitment"; the first (and so far only) winner was . . . Barbara Jordan. The event raised $150,000.

Despite its potential as a political juggernaut, the HWPC likes to pace itself, selecting only a few "issues" a year upon which to concentrate—an understandable caution, since starlets, no matter how many balls are in the air, can seldom juggle more than one at a time (unless they're a producer's). This year the group's three issues, according to Marge Tabankin, executive director of the HWPC, are a "non-interventionist foreign policy," the environment, and "choice." This last is the current euphemism for legalized abortion, a truncated form of the old term "pro-choice" (itself a euphemism). The "pro" has been interdicted from accepted usage by the choice movement's lexicographers, presumably for reasons of pith. (Or perhaps for other reasons. As a fellow who worked for the rock group REO Speedwagon once remarked, explaining why the band had shortened its name to REO: "It's simpler, more elegant—and it's easier to spell.")

Thus it came as little surprise when the HWPC dispatched a contingent for what was sure to be *the* social event of the "choice" season: the "March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives," held here over a weekend in mid-April. The starlets' every step in the nation's capital—and as a reporter I of course had to monitor each one closely—illustrated the ease with which the HWPC is able to move between the two different worlds of Hollywood and Washington. The HWPC contingent was 250 strong—a figure that does not include the obligatory cosmeticians, hairstylists, and speech coaches, nor the starlets' finely muscled, deeply tanned toy-boys who had come along for the ride but who for the most part remained on the periphery of the weekend's activities, thoughtfully chewing gum and trying to keep their hair in place.

Who then were the noble 250? "We are writers, we are actresses, we are camera people, we are producers, we are directors," announced Miss Tabankin shortly after the HWPC hit town, "and now we are here as enablers." One thing a contingent of TV actresses can enable, of course, is a packed press conference, and indeed the reporters were all but swinging from the Bakelite chandeliers in the Hyatt Regency's grand ballroom the afternoon before the march, when the HWPC starlets (and the producers, directors, etc., as if anybody cared about them) joined other march organizers to meet the Washington press. For purposes of publicity, naturally, it was the actresses who came to the fore. With great excitement the hacks huddled around Kelly McGillis and Jane Fonda, Veronica Hamel and Donna Mills, Cybill Shepherd and a dozen others I have seen during my ritualistic nightly viewing of "Entertainment Tonight," although I couldn't for the life of me recall their names. Morgan Fairchild, who has donned her negligée for any number of evening soap operas and made-for-TV movies, was chosen as HWPC spokesstarlet for the Choice Weekend. (She also serves as "chair"—another easier-to-spell truncation—of the HWPC's busy "reproductive-freedom" subcommittee.) Head high, shoulders back, her golden hair falling in angelic cascades, she read a prepared statement about applying "our professional expertise and public visibility to effect political change." Her elocution was out of this world.

Later, during one of several "press availabilities," I asked Miss Fairchild about the HWPC. She said its role was—this should come as no surprise—"evolving." "In the past," she said, "we've raised a lot of money for candidates, but now we're moving into an issue focus, with an agenda that has a strategy." No wonder the starlets had the Washington press corps in a lather! This kind of statement would impress any reporter, however jaded. Here in the beltway, as a matter of political etiquette, it is generally agreed that every third publicly spoken sentence must contain at least one of the following words: "issue," "bottom-line," "agenda," "player," "strategy," "focus," or "articulate [verb form only]."* In using four of them in a single sentence—albeit a compound sentence—Miss Fairchild proved herself a Washington player of the very first rank; she even added, as a kind of lagniappe, that the "strategy was necessary to implement our feelings on choice." One HWPC member told me that, since Miss Fairchild's career in show business has lately been less than robust, there has been talk of her seeking elective office in a few years. More than a mere player, then: this woman could become another John Kerry.

Which would doubtless alarm the starlet-haters—who are, I repeat, sincere and honorable persons of good faith. Such purists are even to be found among the ranks of the pro-abortionists. A friend of mine, when she heard of the HWPC migration to Choice Weekend, complained that the starlets' presence would trivialize the cause. But think of it from the point of view of beltway reporters: wouldn't you rather listen to drivel from Miss Fairchild or Donna Mills than from a Washington regular like—well, like John Kerry, for example? Or Ralph Nader? There may not be much in the package, but what a package.

After her fine reading of HWPC's prepared statement, Miss Fairchild was followed at the press conference by the Mammy Yokum of the choice people, NOW's Molly Yard. The contrast was stunning. Morgan seduced the cameras with parted lips and a sultry come-hither; Molly scowled. Morgan spoke firmly, affecting intelligence. Molly raged into the mike, and set the woofers in the p.a. to rumbling. Then came another Washington regular, Fay Wattleton of Planned Parenthood, who hollered that the Bush Administration was not only "putting the government on the backs of women but into our reproductive organs as well"—an unbecoming metaphor even for a sex educator. No one need worry about starlets trivializing discourse in Washington. Given a low enough cause, they can even elevate it. —*AF*

*A corollary to this rule, incidentally, and one which applies only to men and women of the left, requires that the phrase "in this country" be plopped into as many sentences as possible as often as possible, e.g., "The choice movement in this country is concerned above all with the quality of life in this country" (Marge Tabankin). With repeated use it becomes sort of a verbal hiccup, much as a congressman will use the phrase "quite frankly."

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CURRENT WISDOM

Radio Interview
The Steve Kane Show
WIOD-AM/Miami, Florida

Miss Susan Rich of the celebrated humanitarian coven addresses questions metaphysical and absurd with uncommon aplomb:

Announcer: Now, on with Steve Kane on news talk radio 610 WIOD.

Steve: We're back with new revelations here on 610 WIOD with our guest Susan Rich of the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
(PAUSE)
But if you had—if you were in a boat—just to—I have to break—you're a great guest. I'm three minutes over my break, which shows you are doing your job well, but what I'm trying to say here is if you were in a boat and you had a choice of either saving a little starving baby or the greyhound you would go for the baby, right, and let the greyhound sink, I hope.

Susan: The answer is, I don't know. And that's a very hypothetical situation and it doesn't prove anything about whether greyhound racing is cruel or not. The fact is it is cruel and has nothing to do with what my choice would be in a very hypothetical situation.

Steve: You don't—wait a minute, I think I'm about to have the big one, as Fred Sanford would say. You don't know whether you would save the baby or the dog? We have to take a break while I—

Susan: It might depend if it's my baby or my dog or my baby and someone else's dog—

Steve: Oh, oh, so in other words if it was somebody else's baby and your dog, you'd save the dog.

Susan: How about the question of my baby and someone else's baby—

Steve: How about the question I asked?

Susan: —my dog and someone else's dog?—

Steve: We're going to take a short break while I recover—

[February 23, 1989]

New Republic

The horrible depths to which Messrs. Collier and Horowitz sank, as reported by Paul Berman whilst reviewing their latest monograph, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties*:

Peter Collier and David Horowitz's new book presents itself as the anti-60s memoir, especially anti-Gitlin and anti-Hayden, who are excoriated for harboring excessive loyalties to the past. Where Collier and Horowitz tread, nostalgia does not bloom. Nor did their own second conversions bring them to graduate school, feminist family life, brown rice, or basketball; or to any other green and shady place likely to seem respectable in New Leftist eyes, such as tomato farming or Hasidism. The authors became Republicans.

[April 24, 1989]

New York

In a review of the hot new movie *Heathers*, Dr. David Denby, the ascetic philanthropist noted for his many charitable donations to the poorest of our poor, lets off a little steam:

Heathers was conceived in the Reagan era, but released now, a blast at the cant of "niceness" covering greed and opportunism, it becomes the first significant Bush-era movie.

[April 3, 1989]

Contra Costa Times

Depressing news of age-old racism's dratted reappearance in the Golden State's most enlightened purlieus:

OAKLAND—A move to curb BART directors' travel expenses brought charges of racism Thursday from two black directors.

Three newly elected directors from the East Bay, who campaigned in November to reform BART, are proposing a limit on travel expenses.

Under the proposed policy, each of the nine directors could attend only four prearranged transit conferences a year and would get an additional $2,000 to spend on other trips.

Wilfred Ussery of San Francisco and Margaret Pryor of Oakland said the new policy would prevent them from attending meetings of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials.

Pryor is chairwoman of the organization, which she said studies the public transit concerns of minorities and women.

"This is a very racist motion," Ussery said. "You're precluding the chairman of the minority transportation officials from leaving town."

Pryor and Ussery are the top spenders on the BART board. When Pryor was BART president in 1987 she drew criticism for spending more than $4,000 on a hotel suite at the San Francisco Hilton during a transit conference.

[February 17, 1989]

New York Times

Mr. Paul Theroux, author of *Riding the Iron Rooster: By Train Through China* and countless other classics, illuminates the cause of his low self-esteem:

Anyone who runs by the roadside in America, it seems, is subjected to catcalls, honks, verbal abuse, unwelcome invitations and guffaws. Things are flung from cars—coins, food, beer cans. People spit: It is remarkable how forcefully people can spit when there is someone either to impress or intimidate. Women joggers occupy a special category in which wherever they exercise they can accurately be described as running a gauntlet. . . . This seems to be a specifically American phenomenon.

[March 5, 1989]

Anchorage Daily News

Two jewels from our spy in Seward's Ice Box:

I feel as one with the state of Alaska. Her beauty is my beauty, her majesty mine. This oil in Alaska waters and on her shores, this destruction of wildlife makes me feel like I have been personally violated by those who promised me their protection. . . .

—Cher Rutherford

The most recent of the ongoing rapes of the earth, the oil spill at Valdez, has scarred my very soul with rage. I urge anyone who reads this letter to also read Eisler's book, *The Chalice and the Blade* and French's *Beyond Power*. What you will come away with is an understanding that the root cause of these rapes, like those daily rapes of women and children, lies in the (mostly white male) patriarchy. It is the heavy handed investment in power, greed, violence and in the "dominator" politics of religion and governments.

In a world that spills its ugly black greed on our precious mother earth, how long can Alaska remain safe, let alone beautiful? Not long if oil companies are allowed to further develop. I wonder how heavily our major politicians are privately invested in oil. I wonder what would happen if the 65 percent of every tax dollar that goes to military buildup would go instead into environmental protection.

There is a better way. It calls for an end to patriarchal economy with its greed, exploitation and rape. Please join the growing ranks of non-patriarchal men and women who want to live in a beautiful, peaceful, pleasurable earth in egalitarian partnerships. Tell Exxon to spill its seeds of greed on the lawns of its corporate executives and leave us alone.

—Rose Odom, Ph.D.

[April 10, 1989]

Philadelphia Inquirer

Mr. Helmut Raether of Deutsch Presse-Agentur transforms anthropology into Art:

TOKYO—Finding somewhere to answer nature's call can be confusing in Japan, where a public convenience isn't always quite what it seems.

The latest luxury toilets that have been replacing the humble public latrines up and down the country have names like "Marble Pocket" and "Charm Station," and newspaper reports of their inauguration read like reviews of theater premieres. . . . Users spend more than $2 to enter one of the cubicles, each of which is named after a famous brand of perfume.

A toilet receptionist instead of the more familiar attendant ushers the customers into one of six rooms, each of which measures 3.3 square yards and contains every comfort, including a hair dryer.

The "lingering time" tends to be longer than in conventional conveniences, and the receptionist has noticed that many visitors are lulled to sleep by the gentle strains of Baroque music that issue from loudspeakers installed in the cubicles.

[February 19, 1989]

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[Winter/Spring 1989]

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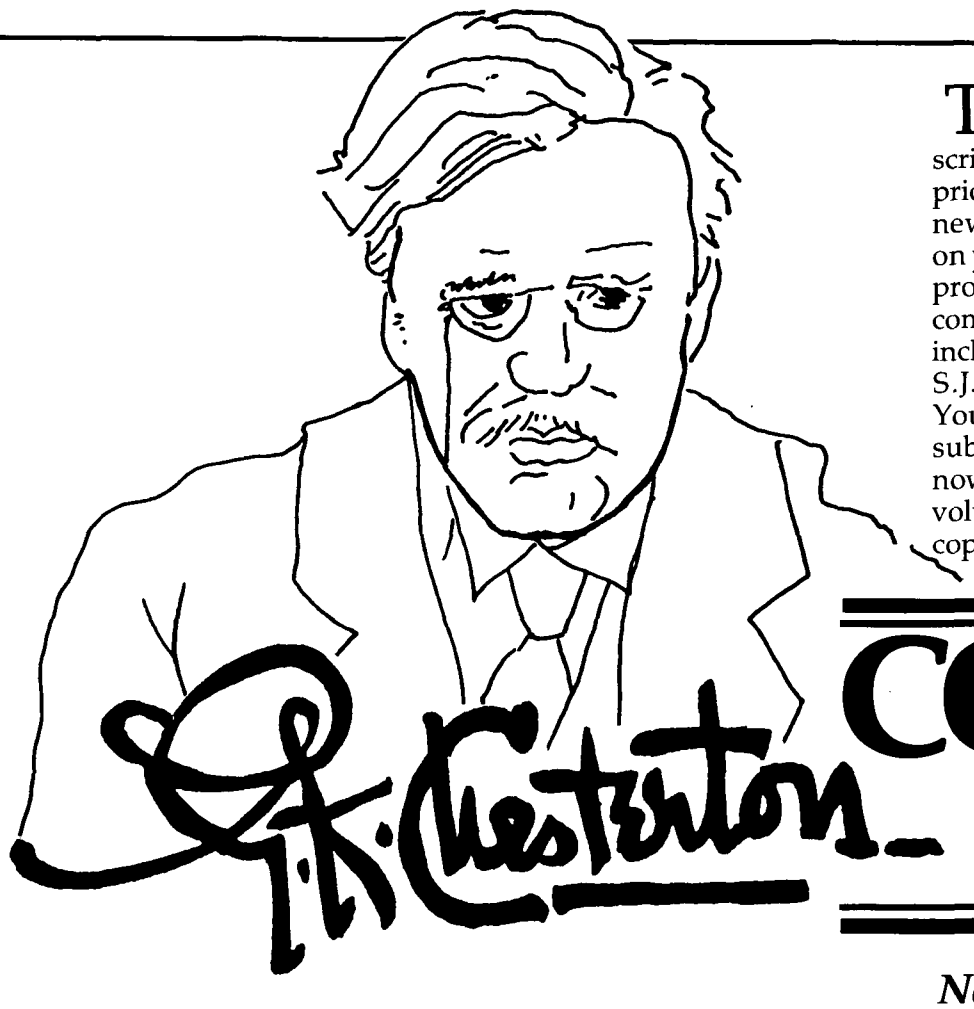

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